CONVENTION ISSUE
COMIC CRUSADER
No. 10
45c
by

WELCOME TO THE 1970 COMIC CONVENTION

Yes, it's Comic Crusader's convention issue! No, it's not the issue advertised in issue #9. There are a number of reasons for this change, and they are as follows. First and foremost, just about all my readers love the "Crusader" convention issue. There are a lot of other zines covering the con this year; therefore if I had put out the issue advertised, by the time "Crusader's" Convention Issue came out, it would be "old news!"

My second reason, for the switch, is because the Flash Gordon article I'd planned for issue #10 has gotten out of hand. It's now going to be a complete Flash Gordon book, in the next issue of "Crusader". Not only are Mike Royer and I doing some art and articles, but Al Williamson has come through with a beautiful Flash Gordon cover and some interior art. I'm in Al's debt, for doing this especially for Comic Crusader. Another pro, named Joe Sinnott, is a Flash Gordon fan and he's promised to do something for this issue too. Then Bill Black and I have a little something going, that should turn you on. So don't miss this one gang. I hope to make this issue the most fantastic Flash Gordon piece ever to hit fandom. If it turns out the way I hope it will, it should be quite a collector's item.

There are a lot of changes and new types of issues in store for you readers. Some of the changes, you can see in this issue. The Defender will be in issue #12 and will be a complete story, finishing off the one started in issue #8.

Now my next piece of business concerns the price of Comic Crusader. As many of you know, I raised the price of this zine to 45¢, last issue. This price applies for this issue only! Starting with issue #11, the price will be 50¢. Now before you start boiling oil to drop me in, hear me out! I've added more pages to "Crusader" and I'm trying for a little more professional format, without losing the fan made flavor. I hope the finished product will be a zine you'll want to keep for years. The increase to 50¢ will be the final increase. I believe I can give you readers a zine with top quality material, covering the comic media, for a price more in line with your pocket book. Sure, I could go back to the 35¢ format, but if you dig well written and well drawn material, relating to your hobby of comic collecting, the 50¢ product should be the answer! You can buy zines of pro quality for $1.00 or $5.00, but these often relate to one topic or they are completely art oriented. Not that this is bad, but I'm going to give you a zine of the same quality, that relates to the whole comic media and for less money! So bear with me. If you don't dig the 50¢ "Crusader" after issue #13, we'll go back to the smaller 35¢ issue.

Starting with issue #11, you can subscribe for 2 issues. Issue's 11 and 12 for $1.00. I'm only taking two issue subscriptions, so please don't subscribe beyond issue #12.

This will most likely be my last convention issue. Even though "Crusader" does it better, there are so many zines doing Con reports now, that much of what I'd report would be repetitive. I'll still report on convention highlights, but unless something drastic changes my mind, this will be the last Con issue. I do hope you enjoy this one, though! - MLG.

This issue's cover © National Per. Pub. 1970

COnversation

by: Cosgrove & Greim

Greetings readers! Bob and I hope you enjoy reading this issue about the New York and Metro Con's. Bob, why don't you describe your view of the New York Con, so the readers will have a general idea of the atmosphere at a comic convention.

Alright, Marty. I hope this will give the readers some insight into what went on in the background at the New York Comic Art Convention of 1970.

Con's are fun affairs, but very tiring--stay up 'till four in the morning, rapping with friends, visiting with pros, attending parties, rushing out to eat, trying to get to panels on time, etc. That's how it is for ordinary mortals, at least! For gods, madmen, and fanzine editors, it's even more confusing; especially if you're trying to snap photographs, tape-record panels, and perform all the usual con activities simultaneously.

Marty and Ellie had gone to New York ahead of me, so I was alone on the four hour train trip down to the con. I checked in at the Statler-Hilton and upon arriving at my room, found it a madhouse of drawings and suitcases. It was apparent that my roomie, Bill Black, had arrived ahead of me. Sure enough, he soon appeared, accompanied by Stu Smith, Agonizin' Al Bradford, and the Romeo and Juliet of fandom, Martin and Eleanor Greim.

From there on in, things got exciting. Al, Bill, and I spent most of our sack time talking about art and new directions for the comic media; and during the days ahead, we rushed madly around, along with MLG and Ellie, going to lunch, perusing the dealer's room and rapping with the TISOS crew. Marty chatted with Al Williamson and renewed his happy acquaintance with guest of honor, Bill Everett. On the last day of the Con, I ran into Joe Sinnott, who had been looking for us for most of the Con. (Us, and a million other people). Marty, the rest of the gang and I spent and enjoyable half hour with Joe and his son Mark.

Like last year, Marty asked that his drawings NOT be included in the amateur art contest, even though he is technically an amateur, but only be placed on display. When Jim Steranko and Mike Royer joined us in MLG's room, I asked Jim, as we were discussing his History of Comics, if he was judging the next day's art contest, which included such fine artist as Dave Cockrum. When Jim said that he was, I, having a painting in the contest, asked Jim if he could be bought. He replied in the affirmative, but was out of my price range. The next day, Jim and the several other pros judging the contest overruled both MLG and Seuling and declared Marty the winner, among the 20 finalists actually entered. "That medal is just like the Blue Max," Steranko later remarked. And I'm not a bit jealous, either, even though I did show up at MLG's abode the following week, wearing every medal I could find from an actual Blue Max to a "I Gave At The Office" badge. You laugh now, Steranko, but wait 'till you read the review I helped give History of Comics this issue!

For those of you who are wondering what clinched it for MLG as art contest winner; it was a painting of the super animals, pictured at the bottom of the opposite page, saying "WELCOME TO THE 1970 COMIC CONVENTION!"

See you at next years con,

Bob Cosgrove -

Thank you, Bob. I'd also like to thank Phil Seuling, for without him there wouldn't have been a New York Con to write a report about. Phil, you're fantastic!

See you at the con,

Martin L. Greim -

(PHIL SEULING)

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A SPECIAL VOTE OF THANKS TO JOHN BUSCEMA AND JOE SINNOTT, FOR THE BEAUTIFUL THOR DRAWING ON THIS PAGE.

KEY NOTE SPEECH

Written by: BOB COSGROVE

NEAL ADAMS

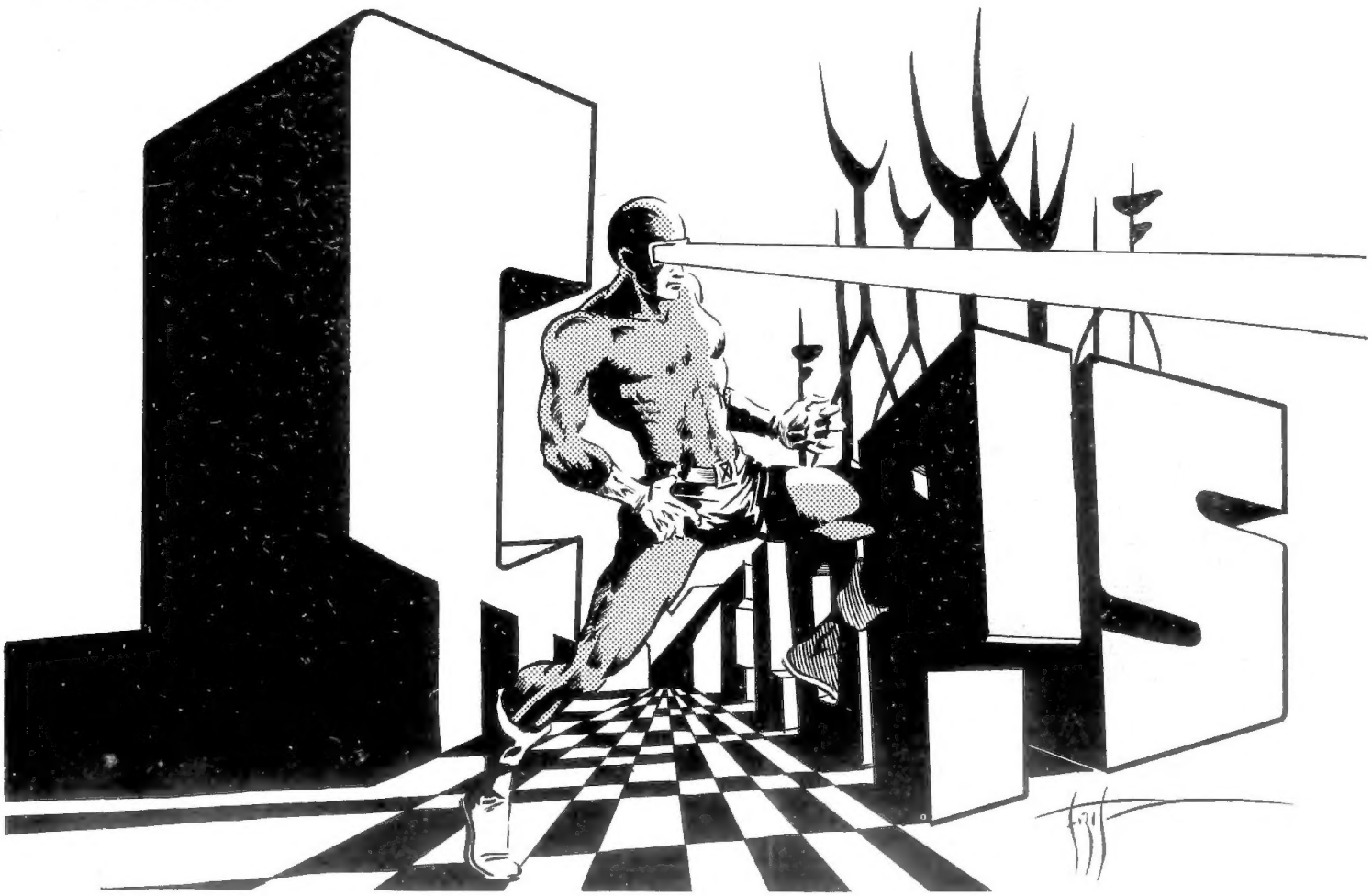
It was 12:00, or perhaps a little after, and the Sky Top room of the Statler Hilton was rapidly filling. It had been a long wait--not just the standing in line to recieve an identification badge, before being able to peruse the original art exhibit and plunder the dealers room--but in a larger sense, it had been a whole year since the fabulous 1969 comic art convention--and the fans were eager to swing into the 1970 version. Phil Seuling, architect and chief designer of the convention, began his welcoming speech. He was proud, but not arrogant. Proud of his convention, proud of the people who helped, proud of the con book, proud that this year, for the first time, a group of underpriviledged youth would be attending the con free--treated to free comics through the efforts of Dick Giordano, Stan Lee, and James Warren. He was also proud, he said, of the fans who came to the convention. A veteran of several science fiction cons, Seuling dismissed them as "putter-downer's" conventions. "I've never seen anyone here treated as anything except an equal in the love of the medium," Phil boasted, adding that one of the many news reporters covering last years convention had told him he had never seen a better behaved group of conventioneers.

Phil was appreciative--appreciative of the efforts of Jim Warren, Roy Thomas, Al Williamson, Gray Morrow, Jim Steranko, Bill Pearson, Chris Steinbrunner, and the beleagured girls at the registration table. And more. More than he could remember. More than we can remember, but still, everyone is grateful.

Phil fielded questions--he told one fan that he was happy to receive suggestions and ideas for panels, and suggested that they be mailed to him, so he wouldn't forget. Finally, one fan expressed dismay that he hadn't heard anything about the con until the very last minute. Phil smiled wryly.

"You know," he said, "I think G.B. LOVE, and his Rocket's Blast is one of the greatest things to ever happen to fandom. He held us together when there wasn't much else. BUT--G.B. is kind of funny in some ways--as far as he is concerned, this convention doesn't exist. You never see so much as a mention of it, unless it's a paid ad."

"G.B.," Phil continued, "is always saying SUPPORT FANDOM, by which he means, SUPPORT THE ROCKET'S BLAST. But when someone like myself, who has helped him out in the past, asks for a favor, the "Support Fandom" bit



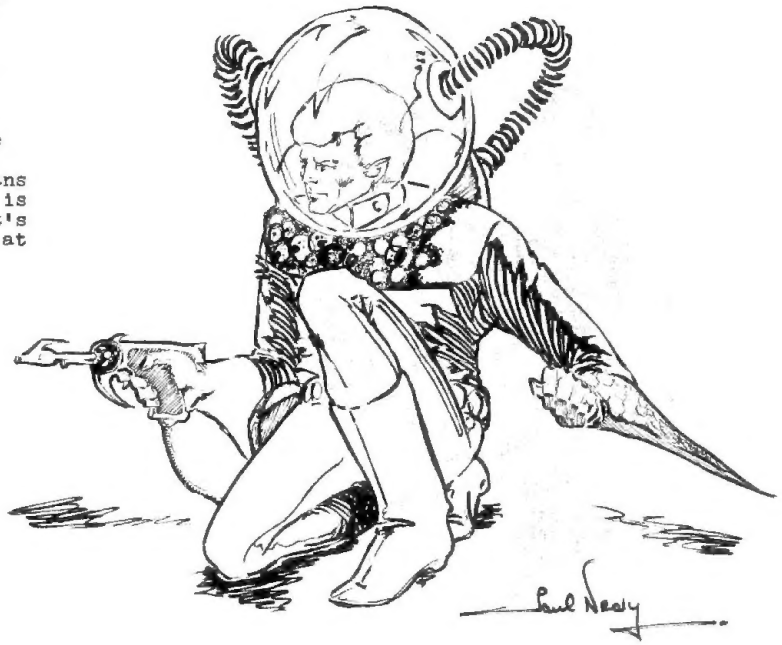
isn't played quite so loudly, even though he prints articles claiming we should do a convention report for HIM. Now I'm not mad at G.B., but wouldn't it be interesting, if everyone who attended this con, sent Gordon a little note saying "Say, why didn't you publicize the New York Convention?" (*Note - The editor and staff of Comic Crusader whole-heartedly endorse Phil's suggestion. If G.B. is REALLY interested in fandom, and not just G.B., let him put his money where his mouth is and publicize the Conventions, which by virtue of their TV and Radio coverage, pull in more fans than the RBCC. The number of fans at the con, 5,000, is a full 3,000 larger than the circulation of the Rocket's Blast. You might point that out, when you write G.B. at this address:

G.B. LOVE
9875 SW 212 Street
Miami, Fla. 33157

As Phil finished, he introduced Dick Giordano, who simply stated that he had asked Phil for the privilege of introducing a man he very much admired. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "it is my honor to present my friend, **NEAL ADAMS!**" Simple, eloquent, it said more than a lengthly introduction. No one in the crowd really needed to be told who Neal Adams was. His work speaks for itself.

Thanking Dick, Adams, no longer wearing his goatee, and attired in a sportscoat with a pink shirt, stepped up to the microphone, and began the keynote speech.

"Anyone who has read the convention booklet that Phil prepared, especially the part where my fellow artists comment upon my personality, or lack of it, notice a great deal of contradiction. I will admit to a great deal of contradiction in my attitudes," Neal conceded, "but in one area at least, I will insist that I am consistent, and that area has to do with the subject of comic books. In that area I'm an all out fan. A fan not in the sense that most of you in this room consider yourselves fans, although many of my reasons are the same as yours. My criterion for being an enthusisastic fan of comics is only in a small way based on the fact that I like to read them." "And," he affirmed, "I DO like to read them."



"My main reason for likeing comics", he explained, "is that I believe in their intrinsic value, their potential, and their ability to do good."

"You see," Neal said, expanding his point, "I believe that comics are art. I think of comics as America's second art form. The first American art form being jazz. Just as jazz is a pure American art form, so are comics. Just like jazz, we did it first in America. We did it more completely. We did it best. We still do." Neal paused, and then continued his analogy. "In my mind, jazz and comics are analogous in many ways. Jazz was not appreciated by other music forms, just as comic art is not appreciated by other art forms. Jazz originally appealed as a gut reaction, a direct and pure form; comics are direct, honest, and pure. Jazz can be simple or sophisticated, and still remain jazz; comics can be simple or sophisticated, as sophisticated as you want them. As time went by, jazz began to affect other music forms, and now there is hardly any type of music that does not draw upon the aspects of jazz --rock and roll, folk song, musical comedy--it's become part of our culture, one of the <u>best</u> parts. Comic books are following the same course. They have already affected our culture by themselves. Generations of people have grown up with a comic book as part of their background. Movie and TV directors have drawn upon comics for many of their visual effects. Educators are beginning to discover the possibility of teaching thru our art form; photo-essays and classier magazines are taking on a comic format look.

What does this all mean? I think it means that comic books are coming of age. Comics began--they got better and better--they became literature with EC. They possibly overstepped their bounds, and they got stepped on. So crushing and devastating was the blow guided by the iron truncheon of Dr. Frederick Wertham," said Neal, as a hiss arose from the audience, "and approved of," Neal came back, "by a concerned society which had a lot to be concerned about, that the comics industry whimpered and cringed its way into a small dark corner called the Comics Code--a self induced censorship organization."

"Comic books," Neal lamented, "continued to pour out, but they lacked GUTS. They lacked a lot of things--reality, blood, cuss words, bullet holes, punctures in bodies, spit, drool, and--heaven protect us, sex."

While the audience chuckled, Neal paused, and then plunged in again, resuming his hard-hitting speech. "And still, with the strictest code ever imposed on any entertainment media, stricter than the television code, stricter than the radio code, stricter than the ethics of the syndicated strips,

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stricter, my friends, than the ethics of little golden books! Children's books do not have a strict a code of ethics as comic books. That's true. Yet, under this code, comic books were still fun to read, and as time went by, they got better, and better, and better, until today, you have a situation where, still under the code, the art in comic books is second to none. The writing is increasingly literate and well done; increasingly, the field is attracting and holding the best of artists and writers of our day. We're in a moment of transition, and the question is, where do we go from here?

I have a few speculations I'm going to lay on you. In spite of the fact that comic books seem to be as popular with the kids as ever, they aren't selling well. Publishers are finally realizing it's because a candy store just can't afford to sell a product for just a few cents profit. Solution? The price of the product must go up. If the price goes up, the look of the product must change. More experiments, like Gil Kane's "HIS NAME IS SAVAGE will have to be attempted." Again, the audience applauded. Neal glanced across the room, his arms resting lightly on the rostrum, and then he resumed speaking.

Magazines like PLAYBOY and EVERGREEN have shown that a more sophisticated type of comic material can be accepted by the public. Therefore, material outside the code will probably be tried. Educators are finally realizing that motivation is the key to education, and what could be more motivating to a third grader than learning his lessons in a comic book format? Imagine, for example, a history lesson illustrated by Gray Morrow and written by Denny O'Neil or Roy Thomas. This may seem far-out, but right now slide films on world history are being produced in a comic book format. I know, because I've done about 25 of them.

A young man, Mr. Byron Priess, who is in this audience, will be holding an auction later on to raise money for a program that features teaching directly with comics.

The final speculation I'd like to present to you is not a speculation at all--it's an accomplished fact! The creative people in this industry have felt for a long time that we need a voice; a voice to tell people that comics are literate, that they're not full of terror stories, that thousands of and perhaps millions of kids learn to read better with comic books than our educational system is able to teach them without comic books." The crowd applauded wildly. They had waited years for this moment, lonely years, knowing the truth of what Adams was saying, knowing it in their hearts, whispering it at fan meetings and on the pages of their fanzines. Now, someone had said it; someone of stature would say it again, before less receptive audiences. Or better still--he was not alone.

Neal continued. "That perhaps their kids would be better off READING about Archie Andrews and his friends than they are watching it on the boob tube. Well, we finally have a voice. The voice is an organization, and the organization is called ACBA (pronounced ACK-buh--B.C.) The association is our voice--our voice to the public, to the publisher, and to the fans. During the convention you'll probably hear a lot more about ACBA, and the things it hopes to do. One thing it's doing, is lending full support and approval to this convention, and the fans to whom we owe a debt of gratitude. Gratitude, no so much for the number of books that you purchase, but for the fact that in the past fifteen years, the only voice raised in defense of this industry when it has been attacked, was the voice of the fans. Well people, we join you--because all of us in this industry, writers, pencillers, inkers, letterers, production men, all of us--we're comic book fans too. And with that thought in mind, I'd like to wish you all a happy 1970 Comic Art Convention.

Scarcely had the applause faded, when Phil Seuling stepped up to the roster, holding plaque in hand. "I'd like to read the inscription," Phil announced, and promptly did so: "To Neal Adams--for the new perspectives and the dynamic vibrancy he has brought to the field of comic art." Once again the applause rang forth, and amidst it, there was Phil Seuling, announcing that Neal had asked for a question and answer session. Naturally, the audience was delighted, and Adams settled down to the business of fielding questions.

Adam' first interviewer asked which of the three companies the free-lancer worked for--National, Marvel, and Warren--Neal liked best. Adams neatly fielded the issue by replying, "Each comic book company works a different way. National hands you a script, and it's a finished story, and they don't like changes made, unless you really feel it's necessary. At Marvel, they give you a plot summary, you talk over the story with the writer, and then work out the details as you draw it. Later on, the writer fills in the dialogue. Working at Creepy is more in terms of trying to fit a terribly dynamic story into six pages. They're all different problems, and any artist whose working in the field today enjoys a challenge. They're just different. They're not better or worse, they're just different. Any comic book company, if it had all the best artists and all the best writers would be the best company, but everybody's so spread around you just can't call one the best--there's no way."

Why, asked the next fan, are comic book characters becoming more involved with contemporary problems, and why weren't they before? "I suspect--it's because the comic book industry was fat, satisfied. The comic book industry was making dough. Then Marvel became competitive with National. National became competitive with Marvel. Now, it seems like every six months one company is beating out the other. The latest gambit is good literature. It's a gambit I welcome, and one that should have been around long before.

Did Adams think word ballons helped covers? He didn't worry about them, felt it a matter of personal taste. He tries to concern himself with drawing a cover which tells what the story is all about.

Still another fan voiced his concern that Adams, in his speech, seemed to be agreeing that the pressures upon society (at the time of Wertham's attacks culminated in the "voluntary" formation of the Comics Code) were justified. "I didn't mean to, and I hope that I didn't give that impression." Neal replied. "The fact was, that there were those pressures on society, whether or not they were justified, they <u>were</u> there. If somebody has me trapped in a black, dark alley, and has a gun on me, it's not that I <u>prefer</u> it that way, that's the way things are. And if I have to hit him because of it, that doesn't necessarily mean I don't believe in non-violence. That means I just don't want to die.

As the crowd chuckled, Neal fielded still another question. "Do you see any need, commercial or otherwise, for the Comics Code Authority?" Adams' reply was, "Yeah. I see it as a group that we can tell parents of the younger children that within this classification of comic books, we are not presenting anything to their children

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that they should find morally unjustified. My general attitude is that the comics code is out-dated, and ought to be changed in a great many areas. But, if we want to do things that don't have anything to do with the comics code, I think the world has come to the point where it will accept comic book format-type things, without having to do with the comics code. And if we make it so, kind of announce it, maybe through ACBA, maybe through the companies, that these particular books are not for children, because they're not under the comics code. Anybody can buy them. Just the way films are. Like everybody's talking about it. There's a lot of noise."

Last year when Gil Kane gave his Keynote Speech, he said that comic books are almost over the hill, that super heroes are used up--what do you think of that?

"I think he's generally right. But not completely. I mean, there are things you can do. I've had arguements with a lot of people in this business. They say, "This character is no good". My arguement is that, "No. This character is good. It's the way he's handled that counts." I think it would create a lot of interest, if super heroes did things that had to do with the world today. In other words, somebody who isn't really human viewing a human situation. Super Heroes, as they are presented, are just 'pase. We're just sick of 'em! I'm sick of 'em; you're sick of 'em. You could just throw up over 'em."

Gil Kane entered the picture, and Adams and his audience spoke of the silver-crested comic king for several minutes to come. One fan asked why Kane's innovateive "His Name is Savage" had failed commercially.

"It failed", Adams said, "because the distribution company, Able News, really doesn't do much of a job distributing. If it was handled by a good distributor, I think it would've sold very well."

Is it true that Gil Kane was sued by Lee Marvin for the cover on His Name is Savage?

"That's scuttlebutt. That's rumor. It doesn't mean anything. If Gil Kane tells you that he was sued--OK, but he didn't tell me that."

Adams' next interrogater wanted to know what the new format for comics would be. As he was offering possible alternatives, Adams interrupted him, insisting that "There isn't going to be any new format for comics". Warming to the subject he seemed most interested in talking about, Neal continued, "I think the NEW FORMAT for comics is going to be variety. It's going to be pantamine stories; there are going to be a lot of copy stories. National Comics is doing a couple Adam Strange stories, where it is practically all text with little illustrations following them; two on a page. Variety is the name of the game, from now on. You just won't know what to expect. It's generally going to be pretty interesting."

Adams' next comment was on whether or not comics were FINE ART.

Since I cringe when I hear the expression, "fine art", I wouldn't use that apallation on comic book art, because I think it's an insult. I think that in general, most fine art is well-decorated. There's very little fine art that I consider any good. Now, I come from the commercial art field. In this field, I'm considered pretty talented. I can handle just about any kind of job. I prefer to do comic book work. If I went into fine art, the pressures upon a fine artist is so ridiculous--! A gallery owner has to like your work, and he has to promote you, and he works out a deal with some review writer...
Now comic books is an art field. The same as jazz is. People who dig comics, really dig it. There's got to be something behind that. In my view, it's because it's a worthwhile medium."

Adams responded to a question asking what value, if any, he found in underground comics.

"I don't think it's really worth it. A lot of guys messing around with a lot of different techniques and for the most part, it looks like gobbldygook. Now, you can go through an underground comic and find not a single good idea on a page, but if you DO find one, it's different; different from what you've been used to seeing. They're trailblazers--they're not terribly professional, some of the stuff is dull as hell, some of it is so sex-oriented that you just get tired of it, but it's just an idea thing.--"

What do you mean by ideas--story, art?

"Just ideas. Vaughn Bode--some people consider him an underground artist, although I don't, has developed a very simple, very direct style, and some people are beginning to make use of it. He's not trying to dazzle you with beautiful drawings. You know, sometimes I get awfully tired of trying to draw drawings so pretty and dazzling that people will go "WOW--Look at THAT!" and forget all about the little caption, and what the story is saying. It's just an idea thing, and it depends on you how much you get out of it. If you have any kind of brains at all, you can get something out of almost anything."

In response to a question asking if Gary Groth's somewhat silly campaign to revise the comics code would succeed, Adams opinioned it wouldn't, and then added--

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"Well, when we talk about areas in which the code needs revision, I would have to have a copy of the code here. It's shot through and through with dialogue that doesn't make sense, with attitudes that don't make sense. Like, "You can't write the word 'crime' on the cover". You can't write the word "crime" on the cover - that's ridiculous! That's STUPID!"

Adams talked a bit about the economics of comics, explaining that the returns on the 12¢ comic made it almost worthless, and affirming his belief in a flexible market. As evidence, he offered the Nostalgia Press books and the Gray Morrow portfolio, which was selling at the con for four dollars. "I don't feel 15¢ is fair to the people who are buying it--they're getting cheated because the artist isn't doing his best--he's not getting paid enough."

Do Archie Goodwin's use of preliminary drawings enhance the visual understanding of a script better?

Adams answered--"Someone just asked me an in question. Archie Goodwin writes his script and on his script he does these little scratchy drawings. Very interesting. They help tell the story; they help the artist understand. Does it help the artist is what he asked. Yes it helps.

Byron Preiss asked if Adams thought a better quality paper and packaging would help comics, but Adams replied that he thought the current format was okay for the younger kids, and that the more "classy" look could be aimed at a more sophisticated audience.

The next question dealt with experimenting in the comic media. A fan asked: I just picked up a copy of "Trump", which is published by Hugh Hefner. It's a Kurtzman, Davis, Elder effort. And it was like MAD, only it was like three dimensional, and each drawing was rendered more like they're doing now on Anny Fanny. The reason it failed, I'm told, is because of a slight setback in Hefner's empire. If Hefner didn't hit a money - crisis then, Trump would have continued. I've seen experiments like the National Lampoon, which show better directions. Do you think National will ever come out with anything like that, rendered in full color?

"Well, since I'm not a voice for National Per., I just do a lot of work there, I'll render my own opinion on that. National, and I think Marvel, and I think almost any publisher today is beginning to see the possibilities. The experiments they're going to have are going to knock your eyeballs out! A lot of experiments that happened in the past really weren't to the point, or they had bad luck attached to them, or bad business attached to them and they never really made it. This time, I think they'll start making it. A lot of good heads are getting together and I think this'll really turn into something that'll dazzle you! Next time I come to the convention, I expect to see some really bright faces of satisfaction on every one of the fans attending. Thank you."

Thank you, Neal. We hope your prediction comes true. But we're not optimistic.

SUPER FANS

From left to right:

Captain Marvel.....Jay Pearlman
Batman.....Doug Aleksey
The Thing.....Avery Seavy
The Phantom.....Jerry Sincovec
The Vision.....David Lumozoff
Karnak.....George Orentlicher
Yellow Kid.....Allen Emanuel
Tom Fagan.....Tom appears as himself
Ming.....Lin Carter
Flash Gordon.....Mark Wheatley
Queen Hyppolyta.....Gwenn Seuling
(Not shown)
Solomon Grundy.....Tom Watkins

Prize Winners:

1st.....Solomon Grundy....Tom Watkins
2nd.....Captain Marvel....Jay Pearlman
3rd.....Queen Hyppolyta...Gwenn Seuling

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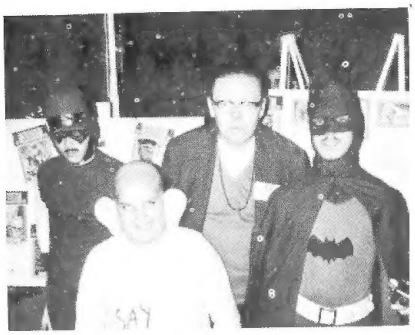
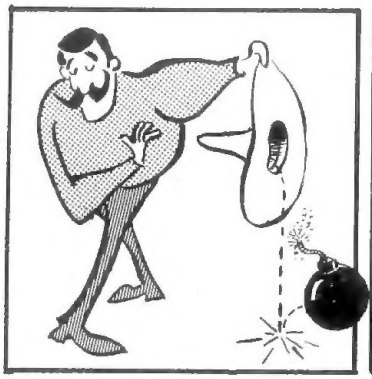
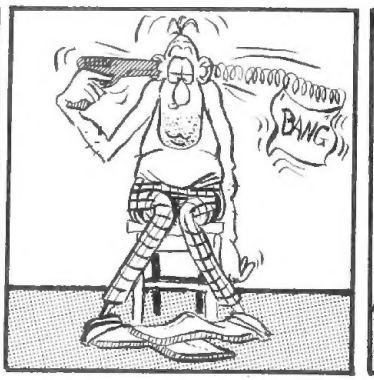




SERGIO ARAGONÉS

DAVE BERG



DON MARTIN

AL JAFFEE

THE MAD MEN

Art & Article
by
AL BRADFORD

John Putnam, executive art director of MAD Magazine, was the main speaker at a special slide show, and also presided over the kibitzing that followed. Four other MAD staff members, however, Dave Berg (The Lighter Side Of...), Sergio Aragones (those zany border cartoons) and Jerry DeFuccio and Nick Meglin (associate editors) were not adverse to chiming in with their own comments.

Truthfully speaking, most of the slide show was a disappointment, consisting mainly of old MAD covers and advertising satires, the majority of which most of the audience had seen. If the gags had lost anything with age however, one could not prove it by Putnam, who, white hair flying madly, gleefully read each caption, faithfully chortling at each gag, and pausing only to identify some of the people in the ad photos. At the end of each slide, Putnam would cackle insanily, jerk his arm upwards, and snap his fingers indicating that he wanted the next slide.

Not all the slides were taken directly from the magazine, however. Some of them were devoted to various giveaways and gimmicks MAD had offered over the years. Pointing at the slide of Aurora's Alfred E. Neuman plastic model, Putnam asked if anyone had actually bought one of the monstrosities. A smattering of the audience cried "I did!", to which Putnam sneered derisively, "Suckers!" One member of his audience had a repartee' that took Putnam momentarily aback. "I stole one!" he said. Putnam paused and then chuckled that he had probably paid approximately what the model was worth. Putnam went on to display what he presumed to be the only MAD Mobile ever built.

The highlights of the show, however, were the hitherto unreaveled glimpses of the MAD staff and offices. Fans sat up and drooled when Putnam displayed the special MAD Portrait each artist on the staff had drawn. Each artist had done his own portrait, with Mort Drucker filling in those of the writers. Putnam went on to display a series of MAD birthday gifts to publisher Bill Gaines--notably, a cash register with a different key for each MAD staffer (the $ sign for Gaines), and a nickleoden which alternated the usual nickleoden fare with shots of the staff gesturing obscenely at Gaines.

Slides of the staff tend to corroborate the theory that they are as MAD as the magazine itself--amongst the sleeping staffers is a giant life-size bust of King Kong, constructed from paper-mache by Sergio Aragones.

When asked if Gaines would ever return to the old EC line, Putnam replied, "No, Bill has a saying, 'Always go forward, never back!" This is forward?

Perhaps the best comment, however, came from Jerry DeFuccio, in answer to a fellow who wanted to know if the staff was worried about Dr. Frederick Wertham. "No," he replied. "Dr. Wertham is probably still out seducing the innocent."

DAVE BERG

NICK MEGLIN, JOHN PUTNAM,
DAVE BERG, JERRY DE FUCCIO

SERGIO ARAGONES

R.Kline '10

At this point, let's take a little break in the Convention activities, to talk to a fan artist, many of you have been asking me to get some material from. He was at the Con and I talked, all too shortly, with him. I found him to be one of the most friendly guys around....MEET

BOB KLINE

© Marvel Comics...1970

CC: Can you fill us in on your background--your age, what sort of schooling you've had, etc?

BK: I'm 23, I was raised in California, in the Los Angeles area. After high school, I attended Long Beach State College for two years and then enlisted in the Air Force, and I've been serving for three years. I work on Airman Magazine, the official magazine of the Air Force.

CC: What does your work on Airman entail, Bob?

RK: I'm called an illustrator, and I do some illustrating, but primarily I back up the art director and assist him in every way that I possibly can, in preparing his layouts for printing, and occasionaly doing drawings, when required.

CC: How far back does your art interest go?

RK: When I was very young, even before I went to public school, I was drawing pictures of cowboys. I used to watch TV a great deal, and the old western movies, then in vogue, did a lot to influence my subject matter. And of course, everyone draws in kindergarten, but I just never quit.

CC: Did you stand out, as a potential art talent, as far back as that?

RK: From what I remember, teachers did point to my work, even then, but naturally, it's all very hazy in my memory. I believe my mother still has some of my pre-school cowboy work, which I do remember more distinctly.

CC: It would be interesting to see them. How about high school?

RK: Sure--I drew for yearbooks, and did other high school projects, and I also had my first encounter with a professional art school. I earned a scolarship that involved six Saturdays of doing water color paintings, of landscapes and so on, on location. This got me away from strict pencil and ink work, and into painting.

CC: Now at what point along the way did comics first intrigue you?

RK: Well the first comic that really caught my attention was Turok, Son of Stone. I never saw the EC magazines, when I was young...I wish I HAD! But after Turok, my interest in comics quickly snowballed.

CC: And about how old were you then?

RK: Hmmm. That must have been in about 1954, or something like that. Prior to that, I had seen comics, but these were the first that caught my eye.

CC: Sixteen years later, Bob, what kind of comics do you prefer to read today?

RK: Primarily, it depends upon the illustrator. I find that in most cases, the quality of the art far exceeds that of the story line. Whatever my favorite illustrators draw, that's what I buy. This is not to say there are absolutely no good writers today. Archie Goodwin, Roy Thomas and Stan Lee are three of the very best. I lean towards Fantasy and SF, but the artwork comes first.

CC: And of these illustrators, who is your favorite?

RK: Well, if I HAVE to pick a favorite, I'd say Frank Frazetta. He seems to be the most accomplished in the field. Hal Foster's work on Prince Valiant excites me nearly as much. Other favorites include Al Williamson, Wally Wood, Jim Steranko and John Buscema.

CC: Do you prefer SF and Fantasy to the super hero comics?

RK: I do. The primary reason is that super heroes, especially the way they are depicted today, are SF entities, rather than costumed crime fighters--the FF, Captain Marvel,--most of them are SF characters, but they're just a small part, just an offshoot, of the whole, exciting realm of science fiction, which covers a much greater area than the super heroes alone. A muscled guy in tights isn't an end in itself, graphically speaking. In SF, you have a wider range to work with, and I prefer this, because I don't like to confine myself.

CC: As you look back, have any artists exerted any profound influence on your style?

RK: I'm sure that there are a number of influences--a tremendous number. There are illustrators whose work I will see on a magazine stand or elsewhere--that really gets the adrenalin going. It's thrilling--it's probably one of the most thrilling experiances in my life, just to look at this art. So I'd say there are a number of illustrators. Frazetta, I already mention-

ed, and also Foster. There are many very talented artists working in comics today--Neal Adams is one--painters, slick magazine painters have affected me--Bob Abbott is one.

CC: Approaching that same question a bit differently, are there any artists working today who you feel are grossly under-rated?

RK: Yes. Frank Kelly Freas, who works for Analog. He's a lot better than most fans will give him credit for. He's one of the finest illustrators in the business.

CC: As an avid reader of SF and Fantasy, are there any books that stand out in your mind?

RK: All of E.R.B.'s works--Howard, of course, is close to my heart. I've done a number of illustrations based on his stories. Ray Bradbury ranks highest on my list of the SF authors, and I also enjoy Keith Laumer and Robert Heinlein.

CC: Let's switch to fandom for a minute. What do you think fandom is all about?

RK: Well, I've only been active in it for about a year now, and I'm sure that there's a lot more to it than I realize. I haven't attended any cons, except the New York one, for example. I think it's a very vital part of the industry--there's no restraint on fandom, and so it's the place to look to for new ideas. There's no concern with sales, so you can have experimentation.

CC: How did you personally discover fandom, Bob?

RK: I read an ad in Mad Magazine for Jerry Weist's Squa Tront. I sent Jerry some samples, and a close friend of Jerry's, Jan Strnard, who also lives in Wichita, saw my samples and asked that I contribute to his magazine, Anomaly.

© Marvel Comics...1970

The FLASH

© National Per. Pub...1970

CC: Are you interested in experimenting with other kinds of comic book efforts?

RK: I'd like to try my hand at as much as I can, experimenting with as many new techniques as possible. I've always been interested in motion pictures and animation. I'd like to become involved with this.

CC: In your comic work, do you prefer pencilling or inking?

RK: It's difficult to say, but I think I probably enjoy pencilling more, because that's where the creating is. Inking is more of a technique, requiring precision--all my pencil work is very comprehensive.

CC: In your opinion, what would be the ideal fanzine magazine?

RK: Well, I like to look for experimental strips--I'd be very select about what material goes into the fanzine--I enjoy reading interviews, featuring professional points of view with regard to the industry--and their philosophies and approaches. In short, the zine would stress quality, experimentation, and personalities. Fan Fiction isn't as intriguing to me as it is to others, but writers need this format. My ideal fanzine would feature strips though.

CC: Who do you think reads fanzines?

RK: Two groups--the ardent fans, and the professionals. The whole existance of fandom hinges upon the fanzine. Fandom wouldn't be very exciting without fanzines.

CC: Where do you think comics are headed for?

RK: Into an era of experimentation, as editors cast about to find a replacement for the declining heroes. The short story horror magazines mark the begining of a new era, but whether it will be as booming an era as the second Golden Age, heralded by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, remains to be seen. The Romance and Teenage Magazines will come to the fore more, as will Westerns and War magazines.

I'd like to see anthology types increase in number. You are always dealing with different characters and situations here, and you aren't tied down to a specific and restricting format.

CC: Do you think the decline of the super-hero has anything to do with the decline of authority figures in society--doctors, lawyers, etc.?

RK: Maybe not authority figures specifically, but perhaps in general. Youngsters are beginning to realize that the super hero is the most ridiculous, outlandish form of human being, because he has no faults whatsoever. And they can't buy that. They can't identify.

CC: Great. In one stroke you alienate both Stan Lee AND Steve Ditko.

CC: Then you believe that fanzines are very avant-garde?

RK: Yes, and they always will be. The fanzine editor isn't satisfied with the type of material currently on the market.

CC: What advice would you offer to the budding fanzine artist?

RK: I received my most memorable piece of advice from a pro illustrator. He said, "Go drown yourself."

CC: Great.

RK: Seriously, it's difficult to become a successful illustrator. Competition is incredible, but two prerequisites for success are an awful lot of hard work, and a burning desire--you have to love your work above all else. Talent always plays a part, but that's a very nebulous area--you have to force yourself to create.

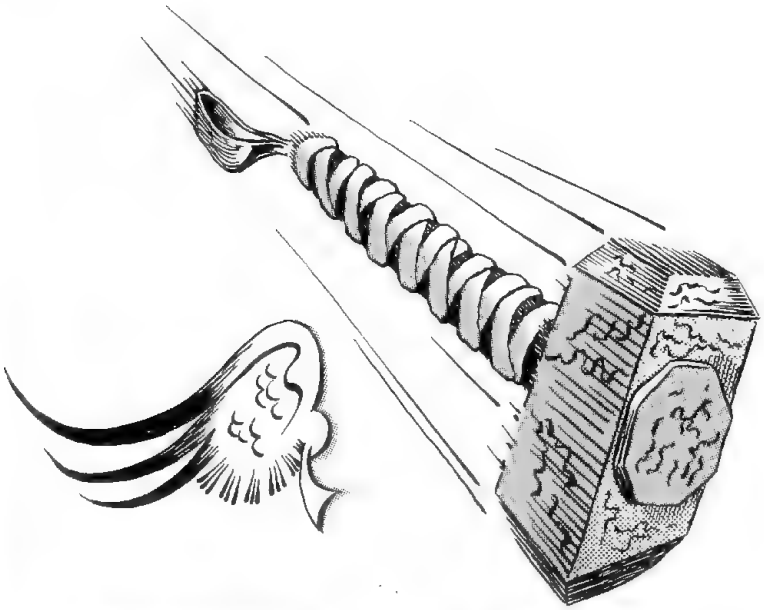
CC: Turning to newspapers, do you have any favorites there?

RK: Yes, but oddly enough, they're the humor strips. The straight stuff has become soap-opera. The few adventure strips still hanging on--X-9, Flash Gordon, Russ Manning's Tarzan, which is a great strip. As good, if not better than any of the previous Tarzan's. It has a very poor circulation though. My favorites are Peanuts, B.C., Wizard of Id and Pogo.

CC: Do you think the weak story lines, which you dislike in comic books, might disappear with the successful team-up of a great artist and a fine writer?

RK: It's happened in the past, usually when the writer comes from OUTSIDE the comic industry. For example... Ray Bradbury's adaptations in EC. Kurtzman was a great writer, of course. I think illustrators have a higher degree of motivation than the writers--at least, I get this feeling, but I don't know how true it is. I hope more writers will become more interested.

CC: I want to thank Bob for this interview and the fine illustrations that accompanied it. He is truly one of fandom's finer talents. I'm sure you fans, as well as myself, will be looking forward to more work from Bob Kline, in the years ahead.



CONVENTION SHOTS

Art...Anthony Kowalik
Photos...Bradford, Black and O'Neil
Dialog...Cosgrove and Greim

Al Williamson and Marty meet.
(M.L.G.) It was like meeting Flash Gordon in person.

Roy Thomas - Marvel Comics top writer, editor extraordinary, raconteur rapid.

(Jean Thomas)
Roy? Roy who?

Wally Wood -
Where would comics be without Wally Wood and who would I swipe the Defender shots from?

Bill Black - a talent I can't say enough about. Without Bill and Bob Cosgrove, you probably wouldn't be reading this issue. OK Bill, put the comic away. Didn't your mother ever tell you they're bad for you?

(Wally Wood)
It's like this kid--I only look like Dynamo when I turn on my belt.

(Archie Goodwin)
Alright kid! Give Marvin back his comic book.

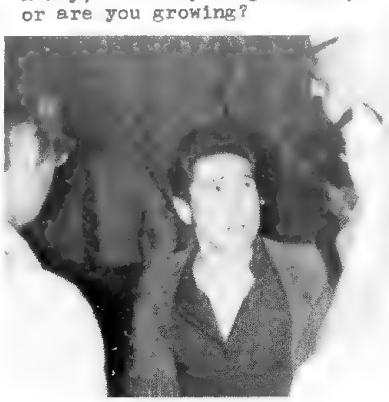
(Bill Black and M.L.G.)
Marty, did you give Marvin back his comic book?

(Jim Steranko)
Thus, when the inexorable helix of light clashes with the geometrical rythm, the symetry of the structural ryth---------

(Len Wein)
Glynis! You beautiful creature, with hair like silk. At last I've found you!

(Above) Jeff Jones
(Below) Vaughn Bode

Marty, is it my imagination, or are you growing?



(Rich Buckler)
Knock it off, stupid. Glynis is over there.

(Mike Royer)
Oh yeah, Warren? Well Bob and Marty don't think you're so tough either! Nyahh!

(Mike Royer) again?
Look Marty! I never thought Steranko would have enough guts to wear that outfit.

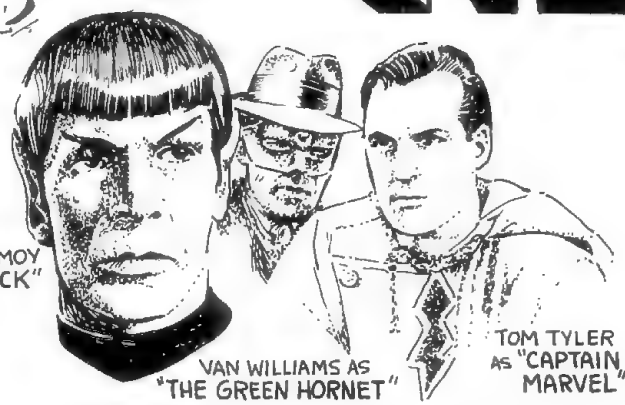
(M.L.G.)
Yeah, but he still dosen't look a bit like Flash Gordon.

(Gil Kane)
So help me, if one more lousy kid asks me to autograph Steranko's "History of Comics", I'll stuff it down his throat!

SUPER HEROES ON FILM

BY William BLACK

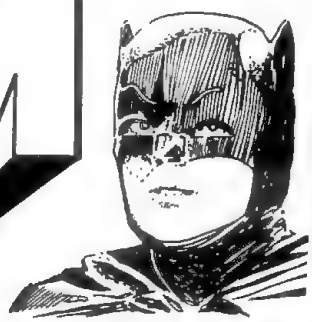
"KIRK ALYN AS "BLACKHAWK"



LEONARD NIMOY AS "SPOCK"

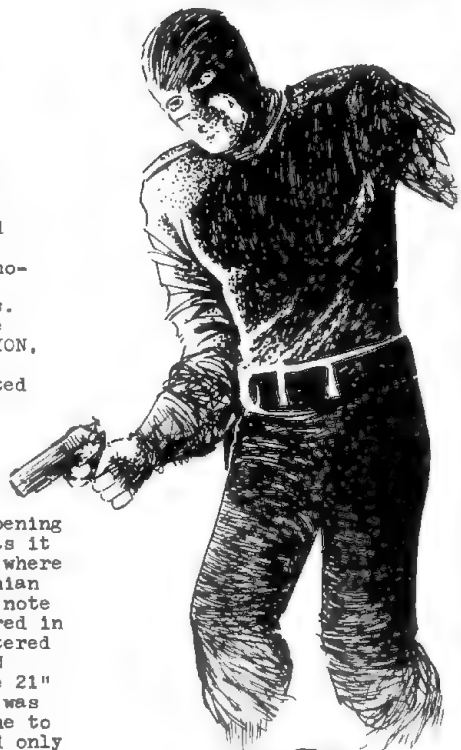
VAN WILLIAMS AS "THE GREEN HORNET"

TOM TYLER AS "CAPTAIN MARVEL"



ADAM WEST AS "BATMAN"

PAUL KELLY AS "THE BLACK COMMANDO"



ROBERT ROCKWELL AS "JOR-EL"

THE FILMS presented at the 1970 Comic Con provided the fans with a varied selection of subject matter that spanned over 30 years. Super heroes of the serials were intertwined with the "camp" heroes of recent TV productions. Dinosaurs once more stalked the streets of New York.

The first film was a short subject of what appeared to be the late 1940's. It dealt with comic strips, rather than comic books. Many famous artists were shown at work. Milton Caniff, creator of TERRY AND THE PIRATES and STEVE CANYON, was shown posing live models in his studio to get the right positions and expressions. Production techniques of how syndicated comic strips are distributed to newspapers throughout the country, via paper matts, was interesting. One hatchet-faced woman spoke out about the evils of comic books and the hideous effect they have on children. She was instantly "booed." A young Al Capp then answered her assertions and came to the comic's defense. Good or bad, the comics have endured and are still read by millions of faithful followers throughout the world.

"Faster than a speeding bullet..." The audience echoed the now famous opening announcement as they viewed the very first episode of the SUPERMAN TV series as it appeared in 1951. We were wisked through space to the distant planet KRYPTON where the serious scientist JOR-EL (portrayed by Robert Rockwell) warned the Kryptonian council of the forthcoming destruction of their planet. It is interesting to note that Stuart Randall, the actor who strongly opposed Jor-El's theory, was attired in the old CAPTAIN MARVEL costume (from the serial of the same name) that was altered only by a Flash Gordon-like neck piece. Was this a premonition of the CAPTAIN MARVEL - SUPERMAN clash yet to come? The technical effects, bad enough on the 21" TV screen, were even more obvious on the larger screen. The tiny rocket that was so crudely rivotted together, couldn't make it out of Jor-El's window let alone to the far distant Earth. Yet it did...nose first. It traveled all that way and only embedded the nose of the rocket about a foot and a half into the ground! Ebon and Sarah Kent, two local red-necks, happen by to save the infant son of Jor-El and Lara from the burning sheet metal. They raise the child as their own but soon notice that he is different. Young Clark has a heart-to-heart talk with his foster mother, "Mom, how come I'm different than the other boys?" "Well, Clark," replies Sarah, "maybe if you wouldn't wear that dress all the time..." But all things worked out. Clark grew up to become George Reeves and turned in his dress for blue and red tights. The rest is history.

Of the serials shown, only CAPTAIN MARVEL, The Copperhead (in MYSTERIOUS DR. SATAN) and DRUMS OF FU MANCHU were permitted an entire chapter. Many previews of action serials were interspersed between reels. These included Kirk Alyn as Blackhawk, Ralph Byrd as The Vigilante, Congo Bill, Paul Kelly as The Black Commando in THE SECRET CODE (it may be of interest to note here, that the very first comic strip that I ever drew was based on the BLACK COMMANDO), Victor Jory as the Green Archer, The Iron Claw, two Buster Crabbe serials, that used the same footage in both films, The Monster and The Ape, Hop Harrigan, and others.

Many TV spot ads, comprised yet another reel. These included Adam West as BATMAN, Van Williams as THE GREEN HORNET, STAR TREK, TIME TUNNEL, LOUSED-UP IN SPACE, and fortunately not LAND OF THE GIANTS. One interesting reel featured some animation effects, most of which were created by Ray Harryhausen. These were EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS, THE GIANT BEHEAMOTH, a lengthly color segment from VALLEY OF THE GWANGI, and the entire last reel of BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS. Unfortunately, time did not permit John Mansfield, a Canadian fan, to show the two complete AVENGERS episodes he had brought along. Maybe next year??

And Now COMIC CRUSADER Presents

THE WARREN AWARDS

© Warren Publishing Co, Inc. 1970.

Article by: COSGROVE & GREIM
Art by: Martin L. Greim

Once again, it was that time of year that everyone awaits with baited breath--time for the WARREN AWARDS, or, to use their true name, The Frazetta Awards. Outside of Jim Warren's immediate family, there were a few other people interested in the ceremonies, most of them award recipients.

Warren, in characteristic fashion, introduced the man who was to introduce him, Phil Seuling. Phil introduced Jim Warren as a man who "needs no introduction," and the award ceremonies were officially underway.

Warren led off by telling of his strenuous efforts to gather his entire staff together for a "team" photo. Finally, he said, he had managed to do it, and he was so proud of the official results, that before printing it in a future issue of Creepy he decided to share it with the con attendees. On the convenient nearby screen flashed a shot from the movie Planet of the Apes.

His opening witticisms concluded, Warren began ticking off the names of his staff, most of whom were present in the audience to take appropriate bows. One thing about Jim Warren...He's tremendously proud of his staff. He may make jokes about them, but underneath this facade you can tell he thinks of them as tops. As Warren introduced his slave labor, he jokingly related an obscene story carefully selected to suit the character of the individual staff member. "Rich Buckler", he announced, "comes into our office once a week, he's always late with a story. We strip him, beat him, humiliate and insult him, degrade him horribly, and he pays us five dollars and goes home happy."

"You know", he related, "as I walked into the lobby, a little girl approached me, and she said, 'Are you Nicola Cuti?'"

"I said 'Yes'".

"She said, 'Can I have your autograph?'"

"I just told her 'NO!' and when she asked why not, I said 'Because I can't write.'"

"'I know,' she said, 'I've read some of your stories!" Many a true word is often said in jest, eh Jim.

"Over here", Warren said, pressing his attack, "is a talented writer, Marv Wolfman. Take a bow, Marv. Marv is also one of the best arguments I know for birth control."

The introductions over, Jim Warren plunged into the award ceremonies themselves. The awards are massive gold cups and statues, statues which Warren claims are representations of Frederick Wertham clutching his groin. Acceptance speeches were concise, as each award winner present merely stepped forward and accepted his prize before taking a seat on the podium for the panel which was to follow. Winners were as follows, and in a few cases, Bob Cosgrove has taken the liberty of expressing a dissenting opinion.

The Ray Bradbury Cup for Best Story in a Warren Magazine: Tom Sutton, for Snowman in Creepy 31. (B.C.'s choice, "Death is a Lonely Place", possibly the finest story of 1970, appearing in Creepy #32, by Bill Warren.)

The Frank Frazetta cup for best illustrated story, to Neal Adams for "Rock God" in Creepy #32. (BC - While Neal Adams is by far Warren's best illustrator, Rock God was a total flop in my book. The choice here, is again, "Death is a Lonely Place," illustrated by William Black.)

The Jack Davis Cup for best cover went to Frank Frazetta for the cover to Eerie #23.

The regular awards completed, Warren announced the presentation of three more special awards, which were as follows:

A special award to Harlan Ellison for "Rock God". (BC still sticks with his original opinion. I.E., you turned the last page of Rock God expecting to see the end of the story, and instead discover that you just saw the end of the story. It is easily one of the worst pieces of writing I have read over the past year.)

Recipient of "Best All-Around Artist" Cup was Ernie Colan, while Nicola Cuti copped the writing award.

Then Jim announced what has to be the most well-deserved award of the entire convention. In a surprise move, Jim Warren presented a beautiful gold trophy to Phil Seuling, in recognition of his efforts in behalf of comic art. The applause was ear-splitting.

But Warren had not yet exhausted his bag of tricks and triumphs. "Recently", he gravely announced, "a young man came into our office with a portfolio. You've probably never heard of him. He's an unknown. But we were so impressed with his stuff, we gave him a position with our company. We made him the editor of a new, adult magazine we're going to be putting out, which will sell for a dollar. His work looks--it looks something like Wally Wood's work. I don't know if he's in the audience,

Frank Frazetta and Tom Sutton

Nicola Cuti and Ernie Colan

Left:
Jim Warren
and
Tom Sutton

Right:
Jim Warren
and
Neal Adams

but if he is---Wally Wood, will you stand up please." He was, and he did, and again, the applause was loud and enthusiastic--it was quite a triumph for Warren, although some fans expressed fear that it would put an end to Woods fine Doctor Doom strip over at Marvel.

The panel then followed. A lot of the Warren staff, including Adams and Frazetta, were present, but the questions tended to be nonsensical and the answers from the artists equally uninspired. The true star of the show was Warren, who, when asked about the "morality of horror comics", declared "There is no such thing as a 'moral' or 'immoral' comic book. Comics are either good or bad. That is all."

Why the recent full page appeal to end the war in Vietnam? Warren declared that it was a "business decision." Everytime there is a riot, a confrontation between cop and revolutionary, sales plunge. Pretty soon, Warren felt, America was going to go out of business, which would have a rather profound effect on the success of Warren Publishing. If, in any small way, the ad helped in ending the War, Warren felt it a sound investment, and promised that come October, he would run a page containing the stand (Hawk or Dove) of every member of congress, in an attempt to influence the Nov. elections. "Denny O'Neil", he revealed, "has just written a story for us, featuring the President and the Pentagon. I can't say anything about it, but we'll both probably end up in the same federal stockade." It's reported that the story will feature President Nixon as a ghoul, and if this is true, it appears to be in appallingly poor taste. Taste, however, has never been characteristic of either Warren, or his publications, although both, more importantly, are entertaining, and can thus be forgiven almost all indiscretions.

Discussing complaints, Warren spoke of negative comments from parents in regard to Billy Graham's girls, and pathetically added that he felt his artists had an excellent understanding of anatomy, and he would rather have young lads learning about girls from his books than from "so-called" teachers. Right, Jim. Hah!

Warren also related an amusing story about a call he had received complaining that Warren was degrading a great spiritual leader, Billy Graham, by using his name in a horror magazine. Jim finally managed to convince his irate reader that Billy Graham was in fact the artist's name, but if he ever gets another artist named Oral Roberts, he's going to be in B-I-G-G-G trouble.

Jim Warren Billy Graham Frank Frazetta Tom Sutton Nicola Cuti

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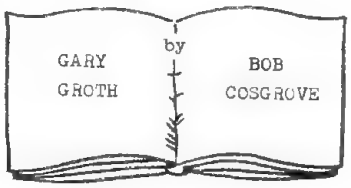
by

COMIC ART & EDUCATION



Intermountain Indian Boarding School is one of the most unique educational institutions in the world, and is the largest co-educational boarding school operated by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. An average of 2,000 Navajo Indian students are enrolled, and most of these do not speak English. Thus, when they begin school, they are taught "English as a Second Language." As the Indians must master the English language to be successful in school and on the job, it is perhaps the most vital portion of the curriculum.

What has all this to do with comics, and more particularly, the 1970 Convention of Comic Art? It has this to do with it: For the better part of 15 years, fandom has been saying that comics are not merely something for slow learners to read before "graduating" to "good" books, but rather, a major, uniquely American communications media, and now, at Intermountain Indian Boarding School, and at some of the schools located in underpriviledged districts in New York City, educators are beginning to say the same thing. No one was more aware of this than English Teacher/Convention Organizer Phil Seuling, who invited Glen Johnson, English teacher at Intermountain's Language Laboratory and originator of the comic teaching format, to discuss his program at the 1970 Con. Also participation was Byron Priess, a young man who has been working with National Comics in a program designed to help teach English in the New York Schools. In addition to the usual crew of National heroes and heroines, artist-Editor Joe Kubert has created some materials especially for the program.

As Johnson and Priess explained it, the two groups of children, coming from radically different backgrounds, face similar problems. They are "over-age" in grade according to National norms, and haven't the slightest particle of interest in reading about the exciting adventures of Dick, Jane and Sally. In the case of the Navajo children, the teachers are not only faced with an age barrier, but also with the difficulties of orienting Indians who have grown up in geographic and dominat-culture isolation.

Like any good comic fan, Johnson subscribed to the theory that one picture is worth a thousand words (in Roy Thomas' case, several thousand) and decided to show his audience exactly how the Intermountain program was executed by employing slides, and a recording of his class at Intermountain. The strip chosen for the demonstration? Peanuts, by Charles Schulz. The projector clicked on, showing the first panel from a Snoopy sequence. Charlie was addressing his canine compatriot as follows: "While our family goes on vacation, you can either stay at the kennell or a neighbors house."

Then, over the tape, Glen's voice: "What is a kennell?"

"A place where dogs can go when they can't stay at home."

"What's the dog's name?"

"Snoopy!"

"What's Snoopy doing?"

"He's not listening."

"Good. How else could you say that?"

"He's not--he's not paying attention."

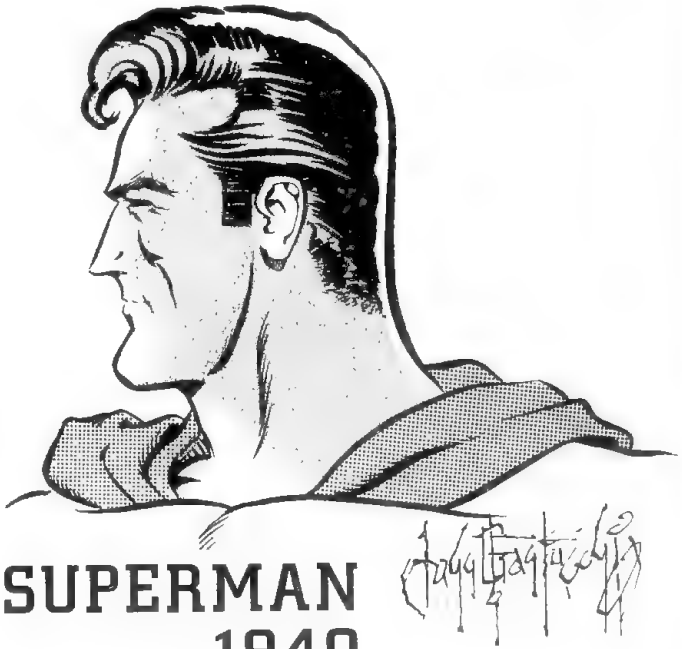
Glen, in discussing the many techniques he employs, explained that originally, he simply passed out a comic book or strip to each student, but found that some students read ahead, and payed no attention to what he was discussing. Thus, he abandoned it in favor of the slide system.

It's been interesting to Glen to see which strips become favorites. Tarzan, by Russ Manning, is an all time favorite, and Juliet Jones scores high with the girls. Modern humor, such as the Wizard of Id, B.C., and The Dropouts, are almost meaningless, unless the idioms and jokes are discussed and explained. In some cases, Glen, with the permission of the writers and artists, has rewritten the dialogue to aid student comprehension--one famous example: Steve Canyon, by Milton Caniff. The teachers at Interstate have already used different strips to convey different aspects of American society--Rex Morgan, for example, vividly portrays the dangers of dope addiction. In the future, Glen hopes to correlate various comic strips with science and social studies.

Priess, attempting to explain the New York program, passed out copies of Kubert's special drawings, and explained his own personal involvement with the program. Priess is a young man, not yet out of college, who has been turned on to education, after turning education on to comics. "Teachers are learning that education doesn't have to be boring," Priess said, explaining the initial successess of the infant program. As with Johnson, Priess soon learned that different comic books appealled to different students; just as Terry and the Pirates proved too difficult for the lower level Navajo groups, so Green Lantern proved tough going for the lower ghetto youth groups.

Unfortunatly, Priess' educational skills were far superior to his abilities as an auctioneer, a fact which quickly became apparent to all those attending the afternoon auction, held for the benefit of the Tilden School Annex in West Philadelphia. Even though National was sponsering the auction, Marvel threw in 15 pieces of artwork, including some by Kirby, and Diamond Jim Warren, of Warren Publications, tossed in five drawings of Uncle Creepy, rendered by Jack Davis. Priess, as previously mentioned, didn't do much to encourage sales. For example, instead of the traditional "going once, going twice," Byron developed a penchant for beginning with "gone". This combined with an unusually thrifty audience, accounted for Jack Kirby art going for $35 a page, or, of all things, a Neal Adams/Nick Cardy double page spread which went for only $13.00. Nevertheless, the auction raked in a grand total of $1,700, and at least another $500 is expected from three other conventions.

This minor flaw did little to diminish Priess' infectious enthusiasm, as he explained about National's newly formed unit, EDUGRAPHICS, to aid teachers upon request. Those interested in learning more about the new EDUGRAPHICS unit may write: FRANK NEURREAH c/o National Per. Pub. 909 Third Ave. New York, N.Y. 10002.



SUPERMAN
1940

Comic Books: Quo Vadis?

© Marvel Comics...1970

MIKE ROYER '7C

As comic books can be said to mirror the times; more than ever the same holds true for their creators...particularly those of today. You don't believe it? Well to be on the safe side, better take a closer look at the comics you've been buying. Their kind may not be around very much longer. And the change is liable to arrive faster than you might guess.

There's a new feeling in America; a need to cast off yesterday's skin, a desire for change and breaking with codes. An anxiety to be original and vibrant. There's a different breed of people demanding better things on all levels. And as young people are making their opinions known, so are the young creators at work in the comic book industry of the 1970's.

How long the comic book field will continue...or even if it will continue, is a matter of speculation. Something, though, is going to happen one way or another, a something that will either kill or cure. Panelists at the 1970 Comic Art Convention made that plainer than plain. Asked to discuss, "The Direction Of Comic Books In The 1970's," the participants responded with razor-sharp statements and caustic criticism, in cold hard tones.

Declaring publicly their war against the old fashion and the apathetic were panel members, Dick Giordano, moderator; Neal Adams, Archie Goodwin, Gray Morrow, Denny O'Neil, Johnny Romita, Roy Thomas and James Warren.

Adams forcefully spearheaded the attack with comments like: "If actual decisions are not put in the hands of the creators soon... comic books are going out of business. Every creative guy in the field has a product he wants to work on, but usually he isn't given the chance... We are running out of patience. The creative people are going to go out on their own."

Adams expressed the hope a day is coming when comic book companies will say to the creative people in their employ..."Great! You handle the book; We'll handle the dough." Adams indicated if this doesn't eventually happen...."Well, we'll do it on our own," (meaning produce their own comic books).

Goodwin backed up the statements with similar observations of his own. He contended comics are going to change in format; they will be of different sizes and shapes, both in paperback and hardcover. "They'll be done by different teams of writers and artists," Goodwin explained. "The product will be brought to the publisher, rather than the publisher handing out assignments."

Gray Morrow described "a full spectrum of change" within comics as now known. "There'll be comics that are educational and at the same time entertaining...There'll be comics for ethnic groups...There'll be comics for all age levels."

Publisher Warren said flatly, the only comics as we know them that will be in existence at the end of the 1970's will be the likes of Walt Disney and Casper The Ghost. "Comics in the 70's are going where the money is, and that's in paperbacks and ten dolar-hardcover books."

Giordano offered his own views concerning package, price and product. "First of all new material is needed. Then changes are needed in the price structure and in the editorial structure." He cautioned these changes would take time; they couldn't happen immediately. "Make the package bigger and more 'palatable' for those who don't enjoy juvenile literature," Giordano continued. "You can't make a reasonable profit with a 15-cent product," not when financial returns are shared as they are now - four ways between the publishers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers." Giordano doubted adult comic books, if and when they are put it production, will be submitted for approval by the Code.

Furthering that statement on the code, all the panelists agreed the Code as it now stands is "too restrictive." They urged the audience to stop complaining about the Code among themselves and instead take constructive action by writing The Comic Code Authority, making their veiws known and offering valid changes.

Deploring what he termed "wishy-washy" attitudes often encountered from managerial powers, Roy Thomas declared the companies are not really ready for new material. A "runaround" happens, Thomas said, when new material is offered and excuses are made to squelch new ideas that could easily lead to new and exciting directions. Marvel hopes eventually to create an older, maturer Spiderman, thus offering a character to appeal to a wider audience than present story lines do now.

Romita commented on the two Spiderman Spectaculars, saying they were originally to have been done without Code approval, but "pressure" was brought to bear and that idea was cancelled. Both books were successful regardless. Technical problems of printing prevented any more.

A desire for creative freedom and a readiness to fight for it was expressed by all the members of the panel.

Denny O'Neil..."No one up here who can't moonlight on other jobs...If 'push comes to shove,' then we'll quit and let them whistle..."

Goodwin..."All of us want to work on special projects. We're willing to find a way to do regular work and special projects too..."

Summing up the panel discussion, Giordano said: "We don't think publishers are three-headed monsters, but the comic book business is in a state of flux and everybody has a solution to the problem. We think our solution will work and we want it given a try. We hope we will be here ten years from now, still talking to you about comics.

Article by:
TOM FAGAN

From the Circular File

Alright fans! Here's your chance to boost or knock COMIC CRUSADER. Each issue, I'll print the most intelligent letters I receive.

About ads - This is not an ad zine. Any ad you see here, has my personal recomendation. If you wish to place an ad, send me a copy of your zine and I'll send you the ad rates and the size your ad must be.

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BOX 132
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02026.

BRUCE V. KALNINS
227 Empress Ave
Willowdale, Ontario.
Canada.

"The times, they are a changin'"
- Bob Dylan

In keeping pace with this changing of the times, we see a changing of people. Maturation? Perhaps. I'd be inclined to call it something else: awareness. An awareness of the total world surrounding us and what it holds for us; life is waiting to be seized. All that is required of us is to look beyond ourselves and more importantly, to look beyond our own little world. Yes, our own world of comic books and fandom which we have created and to which we retreat.

Recently, my attitudes to comics have changed quite drastically, to say the least. The first idea that I discarded was the thematic collection of comics by titles, characters or eras. Let's face it, a character is only as good as the people who are presently controlling it. If a particular character or title is continually being developed and explored by the same staff members, then, by all means, collect him. Otherwise, you're wasting your money.

Regarding a collection by an era, this is another point that I find very discouraging. If someone offered me a collection of Golden Age comics, I wouldn't accept them. Why? Simply because of the fact that the stories and art in that particular period were unbelievably bad. Therefore, I question the validity of such articles as "The Ray" and "The Saga of Bulls Eye". I will admit that I have not seen any issues of these titles, but are they really the fascinating peices of stories and art that you described them as?? Both of the articles were well written, but solely from your description of the plots involved, I would consider the scripts very poor. Terribly cliche'. Just to further expand my point, I recently picked up a copy of Air Fighters Comics, featuring Airboy and The Heap. (I didn't buy it, just read it in the store). From Tom Fagan's descriptive three-issue article, I expected miracles. All I received was the same CRUD I would have expected from any other Golden Age mag.

THE RAY IS BORN by MLB

Concerning art for The Ray, I will agree that Reed Crandall is a fine illustrator To-Day! I would have to see his work from the forties before I would extend any congratulations on his Ray strip. Many people confuse the level an artist has reached to-day with the fact that he was at this same level twenty years ago. I have yet to hear of an artist instantly turning out quality work the minute he starts to work in the comics field and then never rising above his present level. An example to reinforce this confusion of excellence would be Al Williamson's work for EC. Some of it was very bad! At times, he was nowhere near the peak that he's reached to-day; however, most people will naturally assume that the work he did do for EC was exactly the same as the work he's done to-day.

Reed Crandall brings me to my next point, artwork. I have reached the stage where a realistic, possible, well-drawn piece of art is essentially what I am after. With a few exceptions, the scripts in comics now might as well all be termed one huge cliche' with little thought or imagination present. Even a contemporary attempt at a graphic story, such as the new Green Lantern - Green Arrow, is still very unoriginal and certainly its basic concept (the search for America) is a direct steal from the theme of "Easy Rider." Returning to artwork, I mentioned a "realistic" piece of work. When artists such as Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko have become so stylized to the point that all of their characters have lost any human likeness, then I ask myself are these men true artists?? Would they be accepted anywhere else?? Certainly not! The only reason they're working in the comics field is because they're not accepted anywhere else. And don't give me any of that bull about a love for the medium itself. When someone as talented as Neal Adams turns away from a high paying advertising job to work for comics then I call it a love for the medium. Also I hear a lot about an artist's "style" (which is probably why you accept Kirby and Ditko). Isn't style being mistaken for inability?? When someone tells me that a particular artist has a style, I'm naturally assuming that he is able to draw realistically and is merely extending his talent. If this is the case, then why does Kirby insist upon drawing grotesque characters and features when he is "supposed to" be able to draw as realistically as Adams. If he supposedly had this realism, he could also be doing work for an advertising agency, with comics as a sideline and in the end be making much more money than he is now. Obviously, Kirby has never had this "choice" between realism and grotesqueness; therefore we all refer to his work as having a certain "style". (What it actually means is that he can't draw any other way!) The same arguement holds true for Ditko and a lot of the other stylized artists.

Compared to the artwork in the rest of fandom, Comic Crusader #9 had some of the best. However, by professional, artistic standards, it had some of the worst art I've ever seen. I don't understand why you, Martin, and the rest of fandom regard William Black so highly. I ordered his "Paragon" and it was a sheer waste of money. Except for some interesting graphics, the artwork by Black was at its lowest point. Likewise, "Nigh of the Shade," in CC #9. I must congratulate you though, for printing that fantastic cover by Steranko. Now that alone was easily worth the 35¢. In regard to the sketch of Daredevil by Gene Colan, I have to say again, a very poor piece of art. Please do not print professional artwork simply for the sake that it was done by a professional. Many fanzines end up advertising that they have piles of pro work, but when the issue is received, all that is seen is a lot of hurried scribblings from a badgered pro, at a time when he couldn't care less. The Joe Sinnott interview

typified the average fan interview with little or nothing having been learned about who Joe Sinnott really is. All that we've been given is a heap of statistical and biographical material. The drawing by Sinnott had obviously such a Kirby influence that I find it hard what to think of it.

You may be asking, what is my solution, what is my ultimate fanzine? Well, if I was to explain, I could go on for another five pages, but, as of now, I just don't have time. At this moment, my interests are turning more towards the prozines e.g. Spa-Fon, Witzend, Graphic Story Magazine, where a greater emphasis is placed on fine illustration and in depth discussions of the comic medium itself. As you've already noticed, I haven't ordered the next issue of Comic Crusader and I doubt if I will. No hard feelings, Martin, but as I said before: "The Times, They Are A Changin'".

THIS LETTER CONTAINED SO MANY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE COMIC INDUSTRY AND COMIC CRUSADER THAT I DECIDED TO PRINT IT IN ITS ENTIRETY, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS A LONG ONE. WHEN BOB COSGROVE SAW IT, HE SHOOK HIS HEAD AND ASKED IF HE MIGHT BE THE ONE TO ANSWER IT. I THINK BOB'S ANSWER SHOULD SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

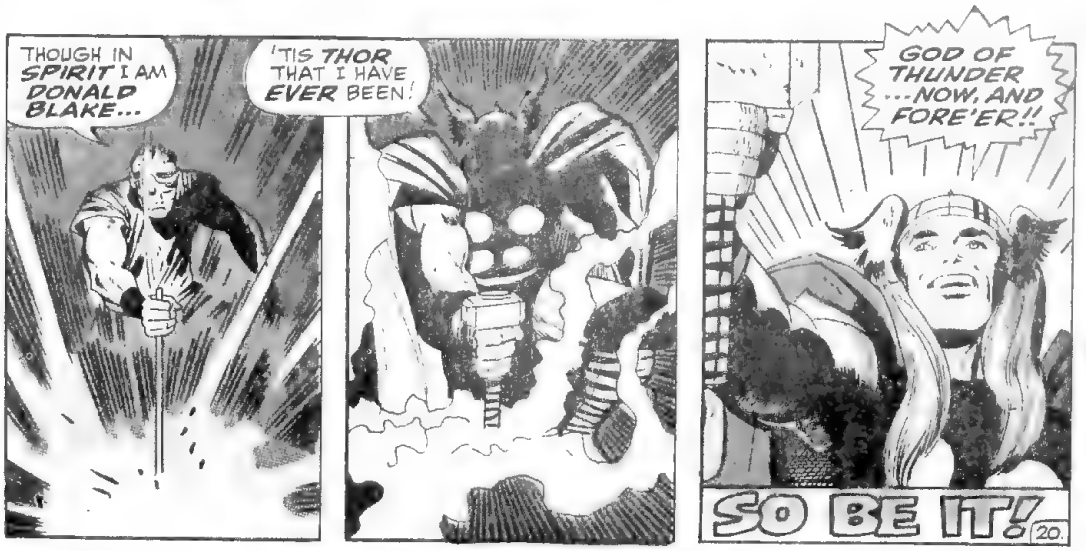
Dear Bruce,

To be honest, your letter indicates to me that your understanding of comic art, insofar as you understand it at all, exists only on the most crude and superficial basis. But before demolishing some of your massive misconceptions, it will perhaps behoove me to examine some of your initial points and criticisms.

First, you tell us all about your new "awareness." You have, you explain, escaped from that shallow world of fandom into which the rest of us "retreat." From this lofty height, you dish out your observations. Get down off your perch, mister. I for one LIVE in that real world. I don't regard fandom or comics as some sort of cocoon in which to hide. The fact that you did, or that someone you know did, tells more about you than it does about fandom.

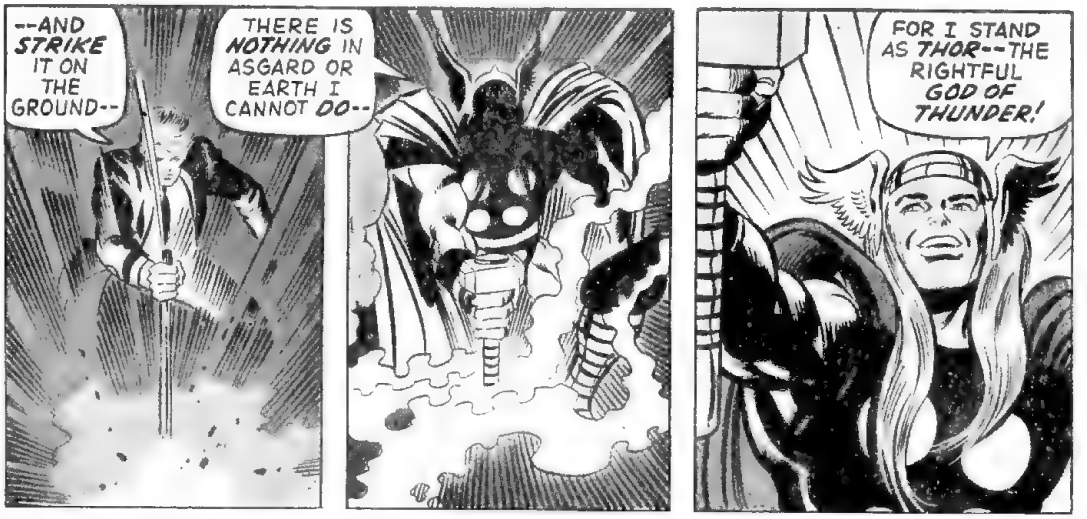
Next, you question the validity of our work on the Ray and Bulls Eye articles, all the time admitting you've never seen the art in question. You'd make a great protester. You're against it, so don't confuse you with the facts. The Ray featured the early work of Will Eisner, the fine craftsmanship of Lou Fine, and some of Reed Crandall's BEST work, which is still being swiped today by such people as Wally Wood, for example. Bulls Eye was one of the highpoints in the Western genre, second only, perhaps, to Kirby's BOYS' RANCH and Nick Cardy's BAT LASH. But I forget, you don't like Kirby. By the way Bruce, who are the "many people" who confuse Al Williamson's work at EC with his work today? I never have. I don't know of anyone who has, although many people do hold Al's EC work in high regard. What is your evaluation of Al's work as "very bad," but another meaningless value judgement, unsupported by evidence or facts.

On the basis of some plot summaries, you condemn the RAY and BULLS EYE as "terribly cliche," and in the same breath, denounce all comic plots today, including the new GL - GA series, which you describe as "a direct steal from easy rider." It may come as a surprise to you, in fact I'm sure it will, to know that the actual number of plots in the history of literature is very small. It is the variation of these plots which provide "originality." For example, there is only ONE plot for all murder mysteries, i.e., someone is killed for a particular motive or combination of motives. Just as all music as we know it comes from only a few notes, so does all literature spring from



ABOVE: Three panels from Thor #159.....Art by Jack Kirby

BELOW: Three panels from Thor #181.....Art by Neal Adams



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a relatively small pool of plots. As a result, it is virtually impossible to summarize a plot without making it sound at least a bit cliched. For example: Babbit: A moor is tricked into believing his wife is an adultress, and kills her supposed lover, his good friend. Paradise Lost: God kicks Adam and Eve out of Eden. Macbeth: Ambition drives Macbeth to kill King Duncan. Don't sound too great, do they. I don't really care for the new GL - GA, but the idea of roaming around the countryside "in search of America" has been around much longer than Easy Rider or for that matter, Peter Fonda. A recent example of the same type theme: Route 66, the popular television show.

Well, so much for your small errors. Now on to your main misconceptions, and your first one is a stunner. "Isn't style being mistaken for inability??" you ask. "When someone tells me that an artist has 'style', I'm naturally assuming that he is able to draw realistically and is merely extending his talent. (Whatever that's supposed to mean--B.C.)". Now it might not be so bad if art had begun with comic books, and if all these years we fans had been laboring under the delusion that style was something other than lack of talent until you chanced along and showed us the light, but such is not the case; "Style" is a term found in art criticism since the year 1. If, as you suggest, "good" art was "realistic" art, then the best artists would be sort of super-realists, exact imitators of nature. In point of fact, the best "art" would be indistinguishable from a color photograph. But even BEFORE the camera, people were defining art, its purposes and goals, in much broader, much different terms. Rembrandt, for example, broke precedent with realism in his famous "Night Watch" painting. In the age of Dryden, the big debate was in both art and literature, the conflict between the "general" and the "particular." Should a portrait be a perfect likeness, or just perfect? Then came the impressionists, the pointilists, the Cezannes, the Matisses, the cubists, the non-objective painters, the ash-can schools, and so many more. The functions of art have been many, but it has rarely served the role of a third-rate camera.

Now let's take a look at the "realistic" Neal Adams, whom you seem to so much admire. Notice the high, protruding cheek bones on all of Neal's male characters. In real life, everyone doesn't have Neal Adams-style cheek bones. And isn't it interesting how most of his characters run the same way, and have the same hand gestures. That doesn't happen in real life either. And how about those bulging muscles, especially noticable on all his costumed characters. Do you think people in costume would really look like that? Of course not, look at Adam West or George Reeves. Have you no condemnation for the psychedelic effects Adams often employs? Look at any Adams character, and you'll see a black line going all around him. When was the last time you saw a person surrounded by a black line walking down the street. Notice the forced perspectives Neal often employs. Reminds one of--of--Kirby, wouldn't you say? Like virtually every other artist in the business, Neal probably admires and respects Kirby. Certainly he had no major quarrel with Kirby's Thor, and drew on Jack's work for his own Thor art. (See preceding page) All of it amounts to one thing, Bruce: STYLE!

It all adds up to one thing: the "realistic" quality of any artists work has no bearing whatsoever on his abilities as an artist. You put down Steve Ditko. Here is a man who is an absolute master of the art of story telling. Story telling is the most important aspect of comics, an aspect you seem virtually unaware of. Here is a man who, in his Dr. Strange and Creepy work, created an atmosphere of supernatural horror that was totally believable, totally different, totally true. Here is a man who in his work on Mr. A and The Question, brought back to comics the social comment we are now seeing in Green Lantern and other magazines, even though the content of that comment differs from book to book.

But then, as if putting Ditko down wasn't silly enough, you knock Jack Kirby, practically accusing him of being unable to draw. Jack Kirby is the absolute father of comic books as we know them. He perfected the superhero to its greatest height; during his tenure at Marvel, the entire industry did little except FOLLOW where Kirby led. An experimenter with the figure, with foreshortening, with movement, with storytelling, with design, Kirby is possibly the greatest artist in ANY field, alive today. Not only is he a master of the super hero, but he is a past-master of just about anything else you care to name. He did some of the top westerns, already mentioned. In BLACK MAGIC, he often surpassed EC in quality of art and story. He led in bringing the science fiction elements into comics, as well as the classical mythological ones. He's done 3-D books. His crime stories remain unsurpassed in the field, and he CREATED the Romance comic book, of all things, and did some of the most beautiful work for them that comics have ever known. To say that you don't care for Kirby's work is one thing; to say that he can't draw displays an ignorance of Kirby, comics, and art in general, that is appalling. And yet, you have the absolute nerve to say that Kirby would never be accepted anywhere outside of comics. Kirby has worked, among other things, for such magazines as Esquire. He could leave comics in a minute, should he so desire. Other artists who "can't draw" either, who only have a "style," are now employed in advertising, magazine illustrating, and other commercial art fields. The super-stylized Harvey Kurtzman works for Look and Playboy; Jack Davis is busy with movie posters and covers for TV Guide, as well as all kinds of commercial art assignments. Will Eisner is operating his own company. And the list goes on, endlessly.

The final, amusing stroke in your letter, Bruce, is the comment that you have now matured to such zines as Spa-Fon and Graphic Story Magazine. We have never attempted to compete with these zines, only to supplement them. They sell for a dollar, we sell for half that price. We try to provide variety, a variety that centers on factual articles and fan strips, with a smattering of pro art, letters, and interviews, as well as a con report now and then. Spa-Fon is an EC fanzine; Graphic Story Magazine, ironically, is devoted to the study of the comic medium. I say ironically, because while EC fans may be "pretty picture fans," you will not find any haters of stylized artists at GSM. Indeed, their preference is for stylized artists: Will Gould, Basil Wolverton, Carl Barks, Alex Toth, and yes, the master, Jack Kirby. They understand those aspects of the comic media which you don't even seem to realize exist. You seem to desire nothing but pretty pictures to look at. If this is what satisfies you, give up reading comic books, and start going to museums and buying picture post cards.

Sincerely,
BOB COSGROVE

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THEN SHAZAM IT WAS.....

ACBA

by: Martin L. Greim

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Like Billy Batson yelling Shazam and turning into Captain Marvel, the people of the comic book industry have yelled ACBA and turned themselves into the Academy of Comic Book Arts.

Throughout the convention the magic word was ACBA. It was news to almost every fan and everyone wanted to know more about the organization. ACBA came about so quickly, explained Phil Seuling at the opening of a panel on the organization, that fans were not yet aware of it. Officers had been elected, consisting of Stan Lee (President), Neal Adams (Vice-President), and an excutive board with such members as - Gray Morrow, Denny O'Neil, Archie Goodwin, Roy Thomas and Dick Giordano, to name just a few.

Excitedly, Phil introduced the Vice-President of ACBA, Neal Adams, who would introduce the panel members and tell of the creation of ACBA.

Neal told how, for quite some time, the creative people of the comic book industry were dissatisfied. Dissatisfied with the way the industry was conducting itself. Dissatisfied with the pay scale. Dissatisfied that the industry neglected to do anything about its image.

Because of this, Stan Lee and Carmine Infantino arranged a meeting with all the people in the comic book industry. They discussed problems and made plans to form an organization to promote the comic book industry to the publishers, to the fans and to the public. This was ACBA. Carmine Infantino felt he could not join, because he was creative head of National Periodicals. Stan Lee joined because he felt he, as an editor, was part of the business. The Academy hoped and felt that Carmine would join the organization in the future.

Neal went on to tell the fans that committees had been formed, some of which would inform fans of what ACBA was doing in hopes of gaining their support and perhaps even help it with an affiliate organization.

The first committee mentioned was the "talent pool", headed by Dick Giordano. This committee would inform the talents in the industry, both established and new, where work was available. Sort of a communications network. At this point, Dick Giordano took the floor to talk about and field questions about his committee. He told the fans he would be going around to all the comic companies finding out what type of work was needed by them. In this way, it would be like combining management and labor.

When asked if the "talent pool" would be for artists only, Giordano quickly replied, "Definitely not! It's for anyone interested in our industry...writers, letterers, colorists, anyone. We want to help people in our industry."

What ACBA planned to do in the future is to publish a newsletter and print it in the fanzines, letting the fans know who the ACBA officers are and where they can get in touch with the members of the "talent pool".

© Fawcett Pub. 1970

The next committee talked about was the Public Relations Committee, headed by Stan Lee. Affiliated with this committee is a lecture bureau. Stan and the lecture bureau's job will be to get together people who are interested in talking about comics. Should a Con need a speaker, ACBA could be contacted and one would be provided. A list of guest lecturers will also be provided to colleges who might need a speaker on the comic book media. More radio, television and newspaper public relation features will be promoted. Promotion of comics on the stands will be a big feature of Public Relations. Distribution and placing of comics has always been a problem to the industry. The industry has been unable to solve it, so now ACBA will take a crack at it.

ACBA would like to be able to provide art exhibitions to Conventions and schools who request it. Also the sale of original art to make money for the industry and charitable organizations.

At this point Jim Warren, a late arriver and the talent who was instrumental in creating ACBA's constitution, asked to say a few words.

Jim compared the creation of ACBA to the early days of motion pictures and the creation of their independent companies. Warren was in hopes that someday ACBA would have prestige awards, televised like the motion picture Academy Awards. He preferred to call ACBA the Academy, as ACBA sounded, to him, like a skin disease. Warren praised men like Adams, Giordano and the founding fathers and believed that ACBA would be the prime moving force for good, in the changing of the comic industry. "ACBA has not approached the power structure yet," said Warren. "These are the publishers and distributors and money factions. We're not ready yet. However, by the fall, when we're ready, we will present ourselves to them in an attempt to save our industry."

If ACBA didn't do this, Warren felt, it would be one more nail in the coffin of comics.

Adams and Warren both related tales that illustrated how people who knew very little have been in charge of the comic book industry. "We're not interested in fighting with the publishers," said Adams. "We just want to show them the new directions in which they can go. That's what ACBA's all about."

ACBA will be having an art service. This will introduce artists who have had only comic book training to methods they wouldn't be familiar with; such as those used in advertising.

There will also be an awards committee, headed by Archie Goodwin. This committee will give awards to the deserving people in the industry and will be voted on by their fellows.

Whether ACBA will be the savior of the comic book industry remains to be seen. It's off to a good start. If ACBA is successful, next years Comic Conventions should prove very interesting.

CONVENTION LUNCH

BILL EVERETT

JOE KUBERT

by
MARTIN L. GREIM

1:10 p.m. and late as usual. Every year Bob, Ellie and I buy tickets to the convention Luncheon and every year we're late. I mentally cursed myself, as we ran along the hotel corridors toward the banquet room. This year, of all years, I didn't want to miss a word at the luncheon. Bill Everett was to be there! A fan of his, since I could read, I was really excited about hearing him speak. Then too, the other luncheon guest wasn't to be missed. Carmine Infantino had been slated for the spot, but because something had come up another comic great had taken his place...Joe Kubert.

These two comic book legends in the same room and we were going to be late!

We finally arrived at the ballroom and there friendly Bill Black waved us forward to a table. We were in luck, the luncheon was running late and we had a front table. Within minutes, after we were seated, the luncheon got underway. At the head table were seated comic greats - Gil Kane, Bill Everett, Joe Kubert, and Neal Adams. Phil Seuling stepped to the microphone and read a short speech sent by Carmine Infantino. Carmine apologized for not being there and told the fans that the 1970's would bring great things to the comic industry. He quoted Winston Churchill, saying in relation to comics, "This shall be our finest hour!"

After reading the speech, Phil brought out an award for Carmine, which Neal Adams accepted for him. Neal went on to tell the fans a bit about Carmine Infantino. He told how Carmine started a lot of the new and different things in comics, before anyone else did. He also told of how a lot of these new ideas were frowned upon by the men in charge. However, Carmine fought for these ideas and finally got them across. Now he's turned it over to men like Adams who hope to create new ideas and carry on in his tradition.

The next personality to speak was Gil Kane, who introduced Bill Everett. He told of how privileged he felt to introduce Bill and that Bill had been one of his original inspirations. Gil felt that Bill was much more than an artist; that in addition, he was an unparalleled story teller. It was here, Gil thought, Bill's greatest talent lay. Bill's work on Centaur Publication's golden age hero - A-Man, The Amazing Man was mentioned and how great the story telling was. "You could follow the action from panel to panel and because of the dynamics, the tension built up, and the continuity of motion, you didn't realize you were looking at single frame panels," said Kane.

Then there was Bill's work on Sub-Mariner; perhaps his greatest achievement. It was felt that Bill was at his peak of story telling in those days, with this character. Gil felt, like myself, that it's a shame Bill isn't doing work on Sub-Mariner today. He felt Bill was the best artist on the character and that he had the greatest feel for him. Bill gave Sub-Mariner a life and personality all his own, that he never had with any other artist.

At this point, Gil began conducting a question and answer period with Bill. The first question Gil asked was:

"What is your artistic background?"

"First, I want to thank everybody here for the honor of sitting at this table," replied Bill. "Without you people, I don't think we'd be so much today and certainly not what we are. To answer Gil's question, my formal art training was never complete. I have to say I was born with the talent. I can take no credit for it. If I take any credit at all, it's just having been able to do so much with it. I've had a pencil in

my hand almost all my life. I actually have only two years of art training. I didn't really have that, I was credited with three years of training because I went through three years in about a year and a half and this is only due to the inborn talent, and the drive that I had to get somewhere fast. That's about the size of my formal art training. I think that anything else was talent, and the desire to put something on paper."

GK..You always were the best writer, I thought, for the Sub-Mariner. What shaped your attitudes for story lines?

BE.."This is a tough one, because I came into the comics almost by accident. I was desperate. I had done some writing, but as far as my inspiration is concerned, I don't know that I really had any. I was sort of led into cartooning by my father's wish. He always wanted me to be a cartoonist and he died, unfortunately, before he saw that come true. But that was probably in back of the whole thing. As far as story telling is concerned, I read a great deal when I was very young. I read what was then considered the deeper novels, the high class literature. I didn't go much for pulp material, I didn't even read the daily comics. My background as far as education - I dropped out of high school and art school. I had to make up for this in reading. I wanted to be a writer and if I had any idol at all it would be Jack London. I liked the way he told a story, and I figured that rather than probably be the great novelist of all time, I would attempt merely to tell the story in the simplest terms that I could summon, that I could utilize. I think that this shows up in the early writings that Gil mentioned. I'm only recently beginning to learn that there was more to my writing the Sub-Mariner than I actually thought of at the time. He was an angry character. He was probably expressing some of my own personality, but again the origin of the Sub-Mariner, I was allowed full expression. There were no limitations set by editors or publishers, or anyone. This was a case where the artist writing could freely express himself and if he had something to tell, this was an outlet for it. Fortunately business was very good at the time and a great many of us didn't realize what we were venturing into, or we would have done more work, if we'd had the forsight."

GK..In the early days, comics were not produced by the publishers themselves, but by special comic book agencies. Every newspaper syndicate had their own comic books and the publishers who didn't have their own material, had to buy newspaper strip reprints. At that time, you, Carl Burgos, and several other artists, formed an organization called Funnies, Inc., which was one of the early agencies. Through Funnies, Inc., a lot of the characters such as Sub-Mariner, Human Torch etc., were created. Please tell us about how the agencies worked, how they got together, how this particular agency got together and what was the role of Jack Kay?

BE.."To begin with, I had been with Centaur Publications and Jack Kay was their editor, or managing editor and he felt the need to break loose in the form of his own company of some sort. So, a few of us banded together with Jack Kay. Carl Burgos, Paul Gustafson, Ben Thompson, a few others were in on forming our own informal art service, to supply a package deal to the publisher. In other words, we would write the story, do the complete artwork, as part of a 32-page or 48-page book. We started very, very small, but rapidly built. One of our first customers was Martin Goodman who founded what was then called Timely Comics. However, agencies didn't last. It didn't work because we were the middle men; which meant the publisher had to pay extra for what he wanted. He soon discovered this and when he did the agencies as such were eliminated."

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GK..Please tell about some of the people who worked with you, and how did you develop the feud between the Sub-Mariner and the Human Torch?

BE..It's a long story, that would take about an hour to describe in detail. Actually the idea of combining two major characters into one story wasn't original. How it came about, I don't remember actually. We were faced with a commission to produce a semi-quarterly annual book of 64 pages. The biggest question was what to put in this book. Going through the various characters, the only two that made any sense were the Sub-Mariner and Human Torch. It sounds simple but it wasn't -- how to introduce the characters to each other -- how to get them involved in a situation which would create a historical "Battle" was really an intricate problem. It was a tremendous amount of work that was accomplished in a few days. In fact, the whole book was produced in a matter of about five days, but it took a lot of people to do it. The book was successful, and I think it was because of the nature of the characters themselves."

GK..If you could do anything you wanted, which direction would you go, and how would you approach your work?

BE.."I would love to see something like Amazing Man again. I would like to see it done in a simple style, instead of going into all kinds of semantics. I would reinstate some of the original ideas and try to create the writing so that anyone, at any level of intelligence, could enjoy it. People are entertained whether or not they get the message, and I think the best way to entertain someone is to put it in a way that he can readily and easily understand without becoming too complicated. A creative person should be allowed to express himself, but in a way that everyone can understand.

GK..If you were to advise budding artists who want to find "the secret of cartooning" what would you advise?

BE..If you have the talent, read as much of the material that's being produced today, so you have a basic foundation. Then, if you still have the desire to do it, you also must have a desire to work hard. It's like anything else, you're not going to make the door open unless you work an awful lot of time for very little money to begin with. First discover whether or not you have the talent, the desire, and if they're there and you're willing to work, then find someone to guide you in the right direction and just work like heck at it. Thank you very much."

Phil Seuling then gave Bill an award that said: "To Bill Everett, for a career-long dedication to superior quality and imagination in the field of comic art."

After tremendous applause, Bill thanked Phil and said, "Its taken me 33 years to get this and I'm awfully, awfully grateful.

Now Joe Kubert was introduced. Neal Adams stepped forward to give a few personal experiences he's had in association with Joe. He stated that it sort of shook him up to learn Joe started in comics at age 12½ and had his first feature at 14. It was Kubert's Tor strip that made Neal a dedicated Kubert fan. Neal was an army brat and on his way home from Germany with his father, whose tour of duty was up. They stopped in Ireland, where Neal picked up a 3-D copy of Tor. It blew his mind! He didn't even remember the rest of the trip home. Neal went on to say, "Joe is one of the nicest guys in the world. He's nice to the point of my ability to understand it. This field doesn't deserve such people, but there are a lot of nice people like that".

Joe payed Neal the greatest compliment he felt he'd ever get. After Neal had handed in an Enemy Ace story, Joe told him it was though sorebody had crawled into his mind. Neal said he was walking on air for a week.

The questioning began with Neal asking how Tor came about, how it developed, and what happened to it.

Kubert replied, "Tor was an idea that came to mind, kind of patterned after the Tarzan strip. I felt the formula was a good one. I was in the army at the time, heading home and I made some preliminary sketches of a character I felt might be applicable to the things that were happening at that time today--morality, etc, and could be put down to a basic mileu of the stone age type strip. I've gotten many letters saying that man did not exist in the age of the dinosaur etc., but, no one can prove to me with certainty man did not exist on earth during the dying-out time of the dinosaur. That's my cop-out, anyhow.

NA..Just as Tor seems to have a sort of morality, when Joe took over war books, they became real stories of what war seemed to be about. Bob Kaniger had a lot to do with this, please tell us a bit about your association with Bob Kaniger.

JK..I think about 95% of the direction and motivation of the stories, where they took on some sort of anti-war tinge, was really Bob Kaniger's doing. He was the editor of most of the material I had done. Within the last 2 or 3 years the tinge you see in most of the war magazines reflects my own personal feelings, but in the beginning any feelings in the war comics, rather than bang-bang, were Bob Kaniger's doing and any kudos should come to him."

Joe went on to relate how at age 13 he and friend Norman Moore used to drop in on any one of 25 different comic publishers. One of them they'd see religiously was Lloyd Jack Kay. "We never got as far as Bill at that time,"said Joe. "We couldn't get in to see the hoi-polloy. Our experience was that no matter how busy any pro was, no matter how pressing a deadline, he'd take all kinds of time out to sit and talk to you. In this field there are the nicest bunch of guys I've ever met."

NA..What do you think, as an editor, about the 1971-72 comics?

JK.."As Neal has said, I've been lucky. I've written, edited, colored, published, drawn for, lettered, etc. All the editors that work for Carmine are lucky, in that they get almost carte blanche to do what they wish, as long as it is feasible. I find now, that I can do almost anything I want to in the strips nowadays. No matter how good, or beautiful, or nice a thing might be, if it doesn't sell then it's down and out. So we are controlled by that, but outside of that particular point, I think at National anyhow, I find I have as much freedom as I like. I like to bridge that freedom to anybody working with me and allow him the freedom to do anything he'd like to do. In the 70's, I think comics are going to take a turn for the better. I think Carmine has done a yeoman service in trying to pull up National specifically and the business in general, to a point where it's going to reflect a lot of originality that for a long time has not been seen in comics. It's going to extend itself into areas where the comic book as we know it now, the small size, will be extended and stretched and perhaps reduced in different sorts of directions. What is going to happen is, we're going to find ourselves doing illustrations more than comic books. Text type material. The type of things reminiscent of the pulps from years gone by. There will be a tremendous demand for new talent that's comicn in. I see a great future ahead for this business."

To a round of applause, Phil Seuling presented an award to Joe. It said: "To Joe Kubert, for the cinematic story-telling techniques and the exciting and dramatic style of his work in the field of comic art".

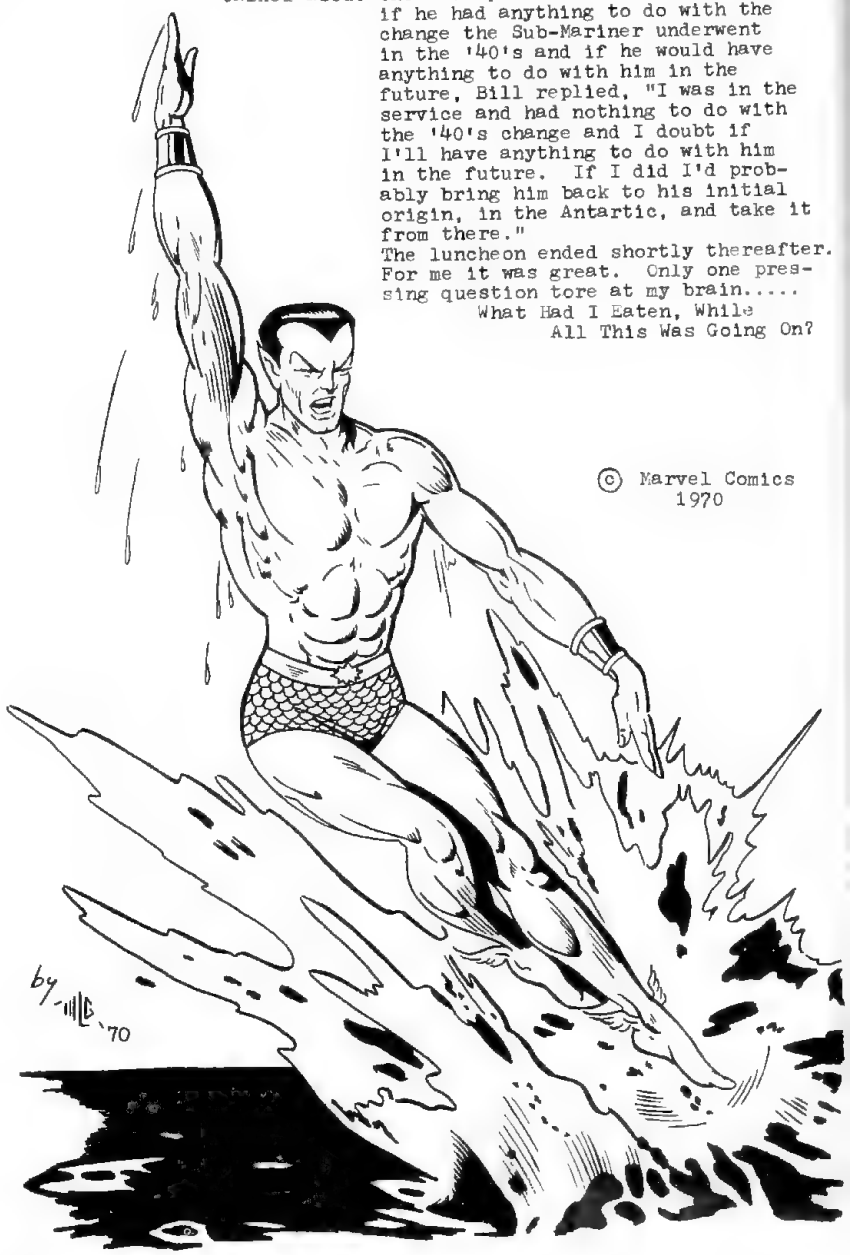
The fans were now permitted to question the luncheon guests. "Is the comics code more lenient to DC than Marvel?", asked one fan. Joe Kubert replied, "No, but I feel both companies are trying to see how much further they can go than they've gone in the past. Also, most of us feel, the code restrictions are not applicable to what's happening all around us today." Kubert went on to talk about how National was trying to utilize the comic book in the field of education. Apparently the picture word combination is a meaningful thing to a child who can not verbalize to any great extent. When asked what things influenced Joe in his work, he replied, "I've been influenced by every darn thing around me. The original King Kong movie drove me up a wall. Hal Foster's Tarzan was as exciting as reading Kipling's jungle books. What I do is a combination of everything I've gathered from everyplace.

Bill Everett was next to come under the fans queries. Bill was asked why all but a few of his heroes were water based. "I suppose," said Bill, "because I've always liked the water. If anything started it, I got interested in Admiral Byrd's expedition to the South Pole and I read a lot about that. The more I read, the more intrigued I became, so when the opportunity came to create a character I naturally thought of water. Jack London's adventures at sea were influential too. I used to read a lot of sea stories."

Bill went on to mention his early childhood in Arizona and Montana. This gave him the background for his western character Bulls-eye Bill. Bill also talked about the name Sub-Mariner. One of his favorite poems was Colerige's "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner". This gave him the mariner part of Namor's name. The sub part came about from reading the writings of the Antartic. They talked about the "sub-polar zones". When asked if he had anything to do with the change the Sub-Mariner underwent in the '40's and if he would have anything to do with him in the future, Bill replied, "I was in the service and had nothing to do with the '40's change and I doubt if I'll have anything to do with him in the future. If I did I'd probably bring him back to his initial origin, in the Antartic, and take it from there."

The luncheon ended shortly thereafter. For me it was great. Only one pressing question tore at my brain.....

What Had I Eaten, While
All This Was Going On?



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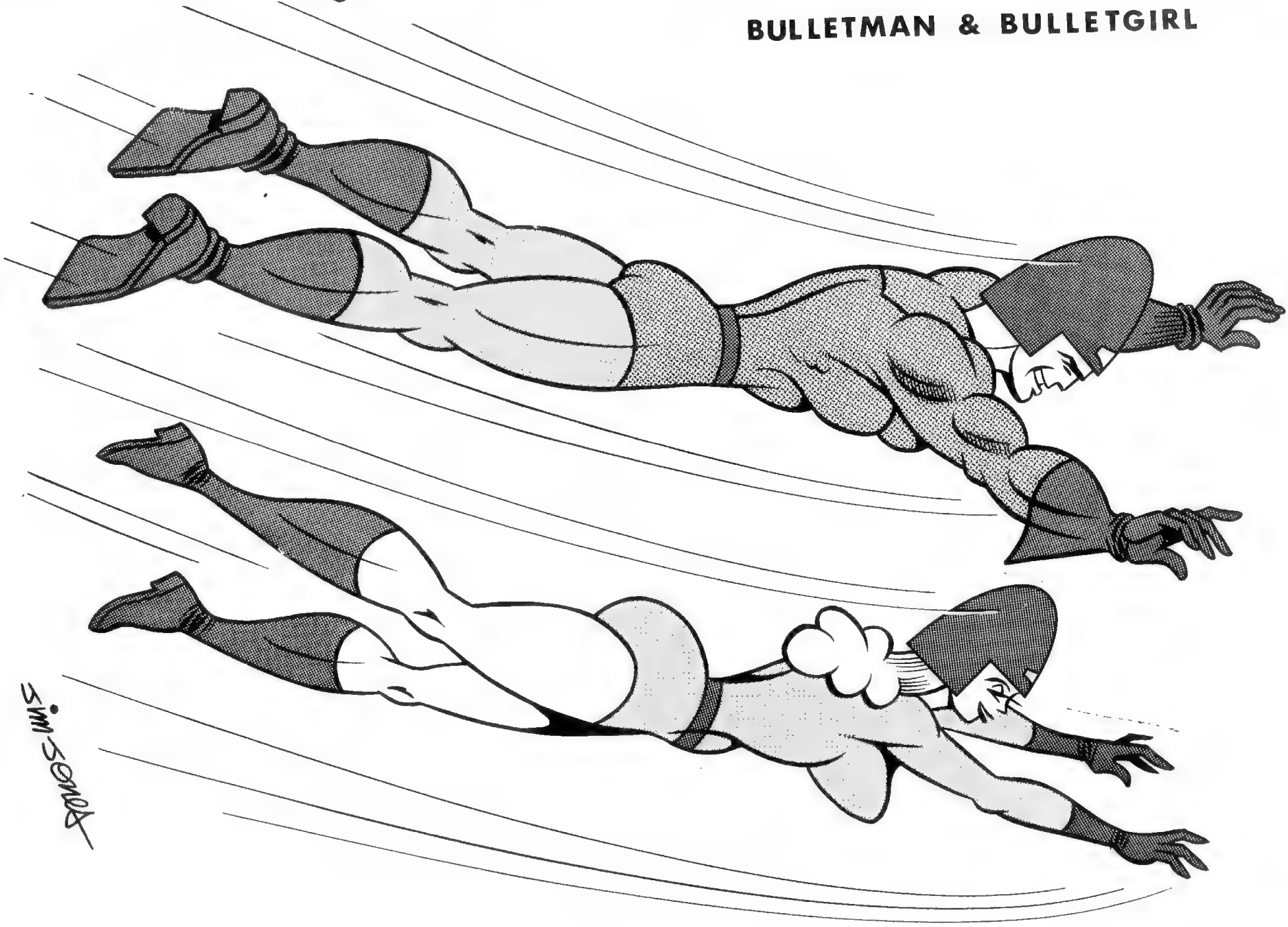
BULLETMAN & BULLETGIRL



A BIT OF...

SWORD & SORCERY

Article by: Martin L. Greim

Art by: Dennis Fujitake & Richard Corben

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It was late Sunday afternoon and the last panel of the Convention was beginning to form. Roy Thomas walked to the speaker's platform and took his place as moderator. It was to be a panel on the newest subject to hit comics..... Sword & Sorcery. On each side of Roy sat a knowledgeable pro on the subject. Taking microphone in hand, Roy began to introduce them.

"The topic of this panel will be sword and sorcery and its role in comics of the past, present and of course particularly the future. In order to get the ball rolling, I thought, after introducing the gentlemen up here with me, I'd ask them each one question on which they could make a very brief comment and then we'll let you fans ask the questions. Starting from my left, is Mr. Lin Carter, who is the co-author of a number of the pulp Conan stories. Then we have the man who scripted one of the first sword and sorcery comics a couple of years ago, Denny O'Neil. On my right is the artist who worked on two of those stories, Mr. Berni Wrightson. There have been an awful lot of paperback book covers relating to sword and sorcery on the stands, and quite a few of them were by Mr. Jeff Jones. Some of the first and finest sword and sorcery stories done in comics, were pencilled by a man who takes quite an interest in the artistic end and writing of comics, Mr. Gil Kane. And I'm Roy Thomas. I'd like to keep the questions, to this panel, related primarilly to sword and sorcery, in relation to comics. The question I thought I might start off by asking is...'What part do you think sword and sorcery will and should and even can play in comics of the future'?"

(Lin Carter) "Well, I suppose that depends on how well your Conan book does. If it sells good, I think it will be imitated and there will be a lot more sword and sorcery. And if it flops, it will probably kill sword and sorcery for years to come. I think it's up to you."

(Denny O'Neil) "I'm surprised sword and sorcery hasn't been more popular in comics 'till now. It's a very visual type of story telling. It has magic, action and adventure, but it's just always bombed. I hope it becomes popular. Stories of this type are a lot of fun to do and I hope we have requests to do more."

(Berni Wrightson) "I imagine it will have to be tried, to see what's going to work. As Denny said, its been tried in the past and didn't always come off. I don't think the two have ever really been combined efectively. There's been a lot of sword and a lot of sorcery things, but its always been one or the other. Conan is probably the first sword and sorcery thing in the classic tradition. I guess we'll just have to wait on that."

(Jeff Jones) "I think that the main problem that will have to be overcome, before it will sell in comics, is the angle of violence. Because sword and sorcery has to have sorcery and violence, I imagine, in comics, the sorcery will have to be played up more than thw sword angle. I think that this might limit the action too much, unless it is overcome, in some way, by good writing."

(Gil Kane) "I think sword and sorcery, like most of the other things that appear in comics, is highly innovative. Sword and sorcery has always been popular in the pulps. In fact, in the '40's a publishing outfit named "Fiction House" turned out a magazine called Planet Comics, that even though they didn't turn out sword and sorcery, like we know it today, it was essentially that. It was from that kind of epic and saga that sword and sorcery is made."

The mike was returned to Roy and he explained how he was in agreement with his fellow panelists and admitted that he would never have been able to sell his publisher on a book like Conan, if he hadn't been able to prove how well paperback books of this type had sold in the past. Before throwing the panel open to questions, Roy handed the mike back to Lin Carter, who wished to make a statement concerning Gil Kane's comments.

"I just wanted to make sure we all know what we mean by sword and sorcery. As Gil pointed out, there are border line cases, like E.R.B.'s John Carter of Mars books. There's a lot of sword, but no sorcery and the comic's super heroes often have a lot of sorcery, but no appreciable sword. What sword and sorcery is, to be very precise, is...It's an action story, derived from the pulp magazine tradition of headlong pace and naritive; which pits an indomitable warrior hero in direct confrontation with forces, not of evil, but of supernatural evil. Which is to say...gods and ghosts and deamons, dragons, magicians and things like that. It was Robert E. Howard who actually pinned down this type of fiction. He combined all the elements of a heroic adventure story, with the fantasy story and the wierd tales."

Lin explained why Howard injected the wierd and horror element into his stories. Howard was trying to sell sword and sorcery to "Wierd Tales Magazine", but they were reluctant to buy it, because it was straight adventure. They bounced most of his early "King Kull" (predicessor of Conan) stories, because they lacked horror. Howard took the stories back and created Conan. In Conan, Howard combined the horror of H.P.Lovecraft with a warrior hero.

After Lin's excellent definition of sword and sorcery, Roy Thomas opened the question and answer period.

The first question asked how Roy was going to handle the Conan book? Whether or not he was going to follow the Conan adventures in chronological order. Roy prefaced his answer, with the statement he was not really pleased with the first issue. He felt, where Barry Smith was so far away in England, that the story lacked. He and Barry had extensive phone conversations and had corresponded on Conan, but this was no substitute for actually sitting down and planning the issue. Getting into the actual question, Roy stated the Conan book would follow, as closely as possible, the chronological order of the novels. By the 4th issue, there will be an actual adaptation of the first Robert E. Howard chronological story, "The Tower of the Elephant".

"How did Nightmaster do?", was the next question asked. Denny O'Neil answered, "Poorly! It's not on sale anymore!" Denny had to write 6 stories for the character originally, but half way through the second story, he was told to end it with the third story. If it was a "raving success" the stories would go on from there. It was <u>not</u> a raving success!

How would sword and sorcery fare under the Comics Code? Roy Thomas felt you could, for the most part, work around it. In Conan, most of the violence, such as stabbing, would be shown off panel. Lin Carter felt that the headlong violence could be toned down, by injecting elements of suspense, chase and cliff hanging. As for the unclad women, in the Conan stories, Lin felt they could be clad a bit. The thing that had always intrigued Lin, when reading Conan, was that at the end of many of the stories, Conan would ride off with some nude girl across his saddle, but he would always appear alone at the start of his next adventure. Lin often wondered what became of those girls and thought Roy could interject this into his Conan stories. Roy admitted there were some "intriguing" possibilities there.

Denny O'Neil too thought you could get around the Comics Code. He told of how, in Nightmaster, he wanted to do a thing with zombies, but the code objected. To get around this, he used instead, characters called "Hackies". Suits of armor inhabited by spirits of dead warriors. They were still zombies, but they were called something else.

Roy was asked if the Comics Code was the same now, as it was when it first came about. He answered yes, but its interpretation is more liberal.

When asked what the chances were of Wally Wood inking Conan, Roy replied, "Very slight!" He'd love to see it happen, but where Wally was editing a new book for Warren Publications, Roy wasn't even sure Wally could continue his Dr. Doom series.

Roy then mentioned an upcoming "King Kull" story that will appear in one of Marvel's horror magazines, being inked by Berni Wrightson. Originally a 9 page story, it had been adapted to a 7 page strip. Its title - "The Skull of Silence!" Roy felt that if Conan was a success, fans would be seeing a lot more sword and sorcery from both Marvel and National.

Gil Kane was asked how the sword and sorcery stories that he had done for House of Mystery had done? Gil explained that the only way he could tell the success of a book was by the mail. National never provides figures to its artists. The stories seemed to have gotten a rather nice response.

Why did Berni Wrightson do two Nightmaster stories, rather than all three? Berni's first attempt was a bomb! The book was late, so rather than have Berni take the story back and correct it, they set it aside and gave it to Jerry Grandenetti with the condition that Berni would get to do the next two stories.

Roy, in writing Conan, refused to use word balloons and sound effects. This brought a round of applause from the fans. "Even Prince Valiant would have been more popular, if it had word balloons," said Roy.

Did Jeff Jones have any plans to do any sword and sorcery for either Marvel or National? No plans, at the moment, to do work at Marvel. However, he was doing a non sword and sorcery story for National.

How does an artist approach a sword and sorcery strip? Does he try for power or grace?

Gil Kane answered that a combination of stress and power and grace and balance was best from his point of view.

Berni Wrightson then told of his approach to the King Kull story he'd done for Marvel. In this story Kull fights the embodyment of silence. Berni turned the silence into tentacles of light that kept getting stronger, as the silence escapes from its prison. It's an effect like washing the color out of a page.

Roy was asked if any of the Marvel heroes would be guest starring with Conan?

Roy explained he'd rather keep Conan just in his own book. If a cross over had to be made, perhaps it would be with King Kull.

The final question of the afternoon, was directed at Lin Carter. Lin was asked if he would be, as executor of Howard's estate, consulting with Roy on the Conan books?

Before he could answer, Roy broke in and explained how Lin was a tremendously busy writer and that he had little free time. Lin then gave a big smile and said, "I'll do it for nothing!" The crowd applauded wildly.

Roy had the final word----"The price is right!"

A light hearted end for a very interesting panel.

This panel marked our last hour at the 1970 Comic Art Convention. Within a few minutes, Bob, Ellie and I said our goodbyes and after a quick supper with Bill Black, hurried to catch the train home.

I've said it before, but I'll say it again, "There is nothing like a comic convention!" There is a certain fun feeling that one gets, that you can't get at any other type of con. I'm most certainly looking forward to next year, when Phil Seuling once again says, "It's Con Time!"

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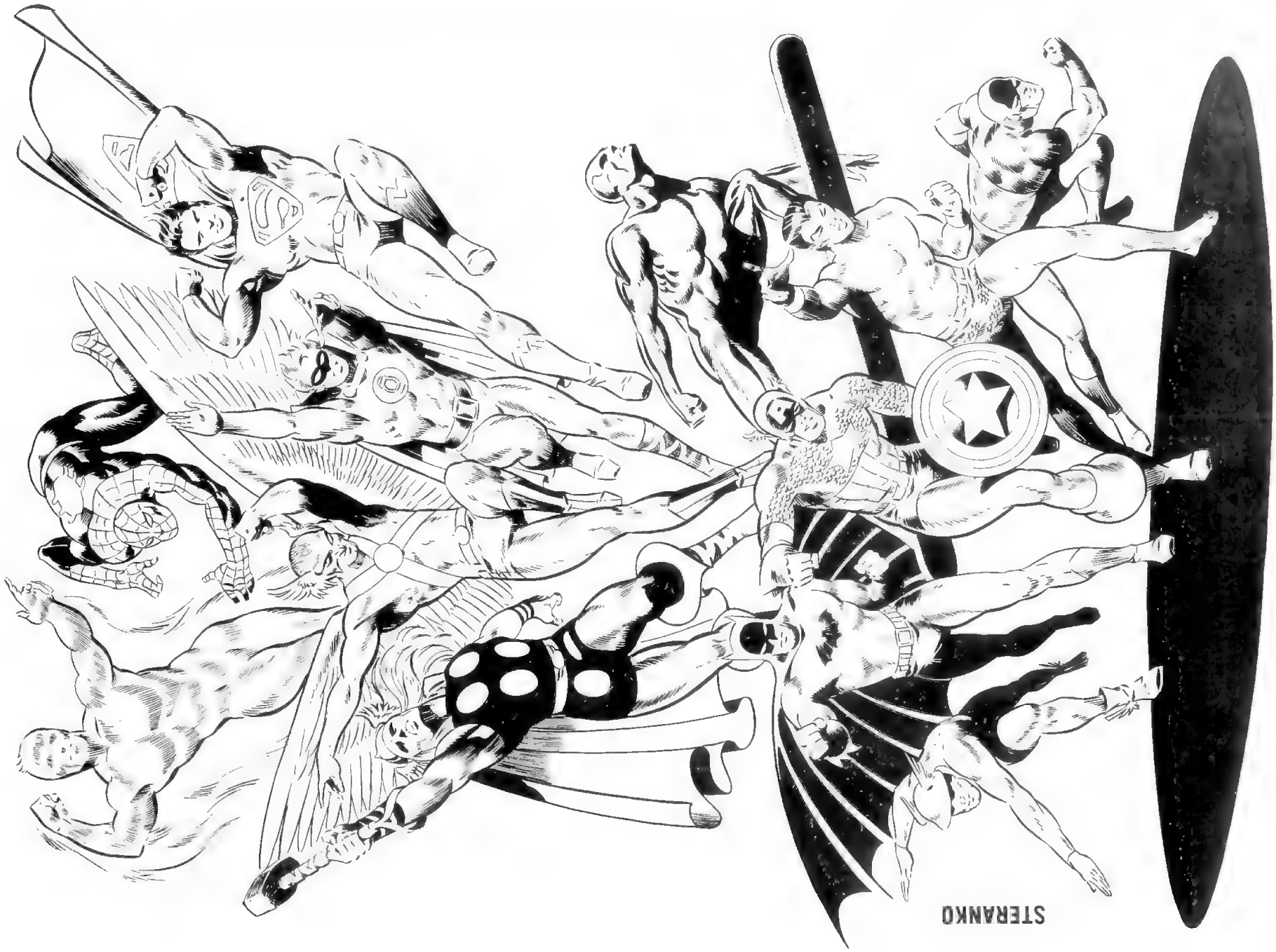

A REVIEW:

STERANKO's HISTORY OF THE COMICS

by: COSGROVE & GREIM

Jim Steranko's History of Comics is the most important historical contribution to the history of the comic book industry to date. For too, too long our field has been historically neglected, chronicled only in the pages of dittoed, limited print-run fanzines. This is not to say that attempts at writing histories haven't been made--there have been several foreign books that have attempted to cover the history of comic art, generally trying to include every country, and every contribution from the Bayou tapestry to Andy Warhol; in such tomes, comic books have generally enjoyed, at best, a cramped chapter discussing Superman, The Spirit, and the Marvel Age of Comics. The Fieffer book, was interesting, of course, but it was mainly a collection of personal memories of the industries early years, not a history. Now Steranko has changed this, and judging only the first volume of a four-volume set, it may be a long time before anyone tops him.

It is interesting to note, that even in writing, Steranko is influenced by motion pictures. Each chapter, of History of the Comics, is cleverly set up to relate to the movies. "Coming Attractions", "The Super Star", "Super Double Feature", "Best Supporting Characters", and "The Kid Players" are just a few of the titles that relate the comics to the movies. It is intriguing subtly like this, that makes Steranko's History of the Comics far above anything yet written on the topic.

The History has several basic strengths, one of which is the quality of Steranko's historical approach. Jim opens the book with a chapter on newspaper strips, aptly entitled "Coming Attractions". At this point, the reviewer is obliged to take issue with some rather short sighted criticism that this chapter has met with, in certain quarters of fandom. As the title indicates, Steranko is NOT concerned with giving a history of newspaper strips. That is a topic for a seperate book in itself; rather, he is attempting to give his reader some insight into those comic strips which were a major, direct influence, on many comic book strips and artists. Thus, it is foolish to criticize this chapter because Steranko failed to devote papagraphs and paragraphs to--say--The Yellow Kid or Buster Brown; for in spite of their historical importance, they were never a direct influence on the comic books. Rather, this chapter provides a base; a base which Steranko expands upon in an excellent chapter on the pulps, which is the high point in the book. Never before has any comic book historian attempted to chronicle the key influence the pulps had in the creation of the infant comic book. Steranko does it, and he does it well.

These same, key historic insights are carried over into the next chapter in the book, "The Super Star," dealing with the creation of Superman. Not only does it discuss the creation of Superman himself, but it, and subsequent chapters, spell out the story of how the early companies were formed, and who the men involved were. Again, this is something that no one has ever done completely, prior to Steranko. This chapter is a treasure trove of new information: M.C. Gaines role in sending the Superman strip (originally done for newspaper syndication) to National, anecdotal and biographical information on Siegel and Shuster, and valuable unpublished originals, such as Shuster's first drawing of Superman, and four pages from an unpublished Superman story, circa 1939, which relates the original origin of Kryptonite. If Steranko's writing occasionally gets bogged down in facts, he is also capable of waxing philosophical.....In the closing of the chapter, he remarks, "If he has weakened, we must remember that like the legendary Atlas, Superman bears the weight of the comic world upon his shoulders. If he has been momentarily eclipsed by the scintilla of stylistic trends, we must understand his position is one of stability, not of change. And if he has grown weary, we must embrace him for the ten thousand and one battles he has fought, outselling all his imitators put together, for his is a timeless triumph and from his life stream all hero strips flow."

Another strength of the book, is Steranko's quiet appreciation of Jack Kirby. The book's introduction reads..."Dedicated to Jack Kirby, without whom there may not have been any comics to write a history about." This is a true statement, but so few, so very, very, few fans realize it. Steranko is dignified in discribing Kirby's contributions--he does not descend to embarassing hero-worship; but he does make clear that in many respects, the history of comic books is the history of Jack Kirby, and in fact, it is.

All this is not to imply that the book is without flaws--it is simply to state, that they are comparatively insignificant. In some cases, in fact, we've noticed that seeming errors of fact or judgement in Steranko's part are actually tributes to the ignorance of some of his reviewers. Few people really knew, for example, that Mort Weisinger was in fact editor of the Superman book ever since the mid-forties, with Whitney Ellsworth occupying a position roughly analagous to that of Carmine Infantino today. They just assume Steranko erred, and wrote their reviews accordingly. The large, awkward Life Magazine size seems a senseless format for what is largely a text volume, until one stops to consider that without it, the beautiful unpublished Meskin, Kirby, Everett, and Kubert work would have had to undergo much greater reduction. Real errors exist though, for those who stop to search. Bill Finger, as Tom Fagan points out, was NOT born in New York, but rather, in Denver, Colorado. The cover is not one of Steranko's best. One might wish that there were fewer covers and more interior illustrations taken from the comic books, and a bit more open, white space might have helped a layout that sometimes tends to get cramped. One might question the note of thanks at the end of volume I, since when the second volume comes out, the "Afterword" will, in effect, be smack dab in the middle of the book.

But all this constitutes not even a minor annoyance, for this volume has been written by the best possible type of author--the professional who is also a fan. The professional, because he understands the medium so well--the fan, because he loves it so well. Steranko is both. He has researched the book well, conducting extensive interviews with many pros, poreing thru his own vast library of comics, and drawing on those of other fans. Often, his debt to such fanzines as Voice of Comicdom, Tint, Champion and Comic Crusader is evident--for Steranko reads fanzines, just as he reads comics. It is obvious that this book was and is a labor of love. We recommend it, wholeheartedly.

There will, as stated before, be a second, third, and fourth volume of History of the Comics. Volume two will contain chapters covering Blackhawk, Plastic Man, and the entire Quality group, Captain Marvel and the Fawcett line (a hero some reviewers claimed Steranko had forgotten) Will Eisner's fabulous Spirit series, the miscellaneous golden age heroes like Airboy, The Heap, Stuntman, Blue Bolt, Black Cat, Daredevil, Catman, The Black Terror, Hangman, The Shield, Skyman, Sheena, Black Owl, and hundreds of others from Atoman to the Zebra.

Additional chapters will showcase the E.C. era, the western, romance, space and horror comics of the '50's, the heroes of that decade and the great comic renaissance of the '60's. A completely new cover will bind each new volume, making each a companion to the first. The price will be $3.00. All that ordered Book One will be notified when each volume becomes available. Jim welcomes comments about The History of the Comics. If you haven't ordered Volume One yet (cost $3.00) or you wish to comment to Jim on it--Write:

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Plan NOW to attend,

The 1970 Metro Comic Art Convention

"AND I DID"

(GARY GROTH)

by: Martin L. Greim

It had been a little over a month since Bob, Ellie and I had returned exhausted from the New York Comic Art Convention. For me, as a rule, one Con a year is enough. However, the kind invitations from both Gary Groth (Convention Chairman) and John Fantucchio (long time friend) persuaded me to go. Ellie and I had originally planned to fly to the Washington, D.C. area, however, when Jim Steranko called and suggested we drop by, I decided to drive. It proved to be an interesting trip and I got to spend some time with Jim, but next time I'll fly. To go to D.C. via Steranko's took us 3 days. We made the trip back in 9 hours. After a trip like that, I feel I could drive in the "Indy 500!"

John and Mary Fantucchio were our gracious hosts and have got to be two of the nicest people around. I only wish they lived a bit closer, so we could see more of them. (Mary cooks a mean breakfast too!)

It was Saturday, August 22nd, and we arrived at the Crystal City Motor Inn about a half hour before Sal Buscema's Keynote Address. We were happy and surprised to meet some old friends there. Marvin Wolfman and Irene and Ellen Vartanoff. We chatted for a few minutes and then went off to hear Sal Buscema. Since there is a limited amount of space, I'll hit on just the high points of the speech.

Keynote

Sal stepped to the podium and remarked that he had the "world's worst" memory and asked the fans to bear with him while he read a prepared speech.

Sal spoke of how a year and a half ago he realized a life time ambition. He had become a comic book artist. For Sal, it had been a rewarding experiance. Rewarding in many ways, but rewarding most of all in the opportunity to meet and work with some very talented and creative people within the industry. Sal was also pleased to have met some very articulate and enthusiastic fans. There was one disapointment though, and that was the reaction of friends outside the industry to what he was doing for a living. He blamed their lack of knowledge of the media for this and the fact comics have "a pretty lousy image!"

Why do comics have a bad image? Sal felt it could be traced back to the time 15, or so, years ago; when some comics overstepped their bounds and presented material that was pretty rough. The public was appalled and this resulted in a black eye for the Comic Book Industry. After which, the Comics Code was created. Sal thought comics had made quite a comeback, since those days. The black eye was gone, but comics were still a little purple around the edges. Since this bad image still remained, it was felt, by Sal, that it was up to the industry to do something about it. And do something they have! As in New York, A.C.B.A. was proclaimed to be the answer. Most of what Sal explained about the organization, has already been covered in the preceding article on A.C.B.A., so I won't go into it here. The Keynote Address ended with Sal telling the fans that A.C.B.A.'s voice would upgrade the comics and put their bad image to rest.

After a brief rest, Sal, one of the nicest pros around, conducted a question and answer period.

What strip was Sal working on? Sal explained that Marvel was in a period of transition, because a very important man had left--Jack Kirby. Because of this, Sal would be doing The Avengers and Spiderman.

Sal's favorite character? The Hulk.

Did Sal think the super hero was dead?

No! For one simple reason. You always have a new group of kids coming along, who seem to get interested in super heroes. Super heroes may die out for a while, but they always seem to come back.

Did Sal feel it would hurt the comic companies to have more of their artists go out on their own?

"It won't hurt the industry. However, it always hurts when you lose a good artist. Like it was kind of a blow, when Jack Kirby left Marvel. Everyone knows he's the best in the business. It's good for the individual though."

Would Sal like to ink his own work? You bet he would. Every artist would.

When asked how he got interested in comics, Sal explained that his brother, John, had been in comics for over 20 years, so the interest came naturally. Sal went into advertising first, because when he wanted to break into the business, in the middle '50's, the bottom fell out of the industry.

Sal felt Frank Giacoia was the best inker in the business, followed by Joe Sinnott and Tom Palmer. "It's a shame they can't ink everybody," Sal stated. He thought the best book he ever turned out was The Avengers #78, inked by Palmer.

What's the rates for penciling and inking, and did Sal ever do coloring? He'd never done coloring. The rates on penciling are from $25 to $75 per page. For inking, $10 to $25 per page. Staff people usually do coloring, except in rare cases.

Why can't the same artist pencil and ink his own books? A matter of time. Right now John Buscema is penciling The Avengers, Thor and he'll be the new artist on the Fantastic Four. Even after John leaves The

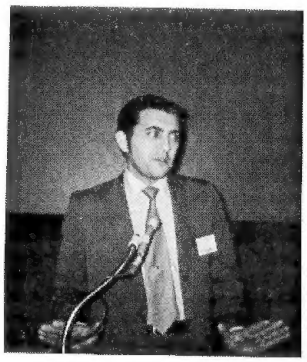
Avengers, he'll have little time. If he stayed with all three books, he'd never get any sleep. He'd be working 24 hours a day.

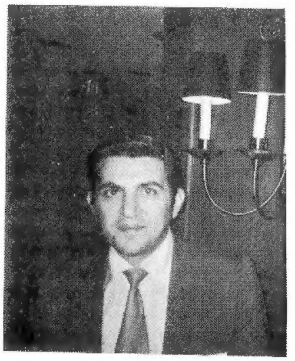
Sal felt that comics were an art form, but that it would never become a great art form. His reason--"Too many people are involved in the production of one book. It's not the product of one single person."

On the use of photographs with artwork, Sal didn't like it. The photos never print well and, most often, turn out like black blobs.

Why are unpopular artists kept on books? Because as long as that book sells, the editor has no reason to change the artist.

Now the question period drew to a close and a gracious Sal Buscema thanked everyone and hoped all the fans had a good time.





(SAL BUSCEMA)

Luncheon

The next event, on the days program, was a luncheon; with Berni Wrightson and Mike Kaluta as guests of honor. I have to say, that, of the con luncheons I've attended, the food at this one was the best. Very tasty indeed!

Marvin Wolfman made comic introductions of the two guests of honor and then told a bit about each guest's history. After everyone had finished eating, Marvin expertly moderated a question and answer period. The first question asked, was why did Web of Horror fold? Berni Wrightson answered..."It had distribution problems. It just never got around. Also the editor, Terry Bisson, left. They made Bruce Jones and myself editors and we had issue #4 all done and ready to come out, but if folded before publication."

What's new at National? Marvin Wolfman gave a few answers. Jack Kirby! He's working on 4 books there. Jimmy Olsen will feature the Newsboy Legion and upcoming, The Guardian. There will be new looks in covers and format. Price changes will be coming too.

Is Berni working for both National and Marvel? Yes, but he's doing most of his work for Marvel. Berni went on to tell how some of the Nighmaster pages, done for National, were done by both Mike Kaluta and Jeff Jones.

When asked if he would be inking Conan, Berni replied, "No! I couldn't ink Barry Smith's stuff. The lines just didn't flow the way mine did. I'll be inking some Gil Kane work though."

Marvin was asked if National's new book "Mr. Miracle" would be played straight, or as a comedy. "It will be straight," said Marvin, "but you'll probably laugh at it anyway." Marvin explained that all of Kirby's new books were one complete novel. All four books are tied in and feature all the same characters. All are in different phases of the same story. They're all working on the same mission.

Berni mentioned that the "King Kull" story he'd done would be appearing soon in a Chamber of Darkness. It was hoped, that if that book sold well, Kull would have his own book, or half a book.

What's Mike Kaluta doing at present? Working on a new humor book coming out, tentatively titled, "Zing". It will be like the old MAD Magazine. He also passed in a story for National, that he'd worked 6 months on. Mike enjoys doing fairy tales, something no pro publication seems to want. This seems a shame, as Mike's work is outstanding.

It was then brought to the fan's attention, that National's Showcase book had folded, because of lack of sales.

When The Guardian is brought back, in Jimmy Olsen, will it be the same character as in the '40's? "Yes, same character, only he'll be dead. You'll understand when you see it," said Marvin. "All of Jack's books are the most brilliant concepts I've ever read."

What type of story did Berni prefer to work on? Sword and sorcery and horror, because they're fun to do.

If Berni was to do a super hero, which character would he choose? Batman, for National and The Hulk for Marvel.

On creating his own character, Berni felt more comfortable with someone else's. He felt anything he might create would be repetitive of a character already created.

Mike Kaluta enjoyed E.R.B.'s John Carter of Mars series. He commented that John Carter's confidence brought him up through school, to the swashbuckler he is today. This brought heavy laughter from the audience.

To close the question and answer period, Berni was asked what his first published drawing was? "A drawing on the fan page of Creepy #9.

The luncheon at an end, Ellie and I left and ran into Bob Kline. Bob is one of the friendliest guys you'd ever want to meet and I spent quite a bit of time just sitting and talking with him. I also met Dave Cockrum and got to chat with him. You'll be seeing some of Dave's art in an upcoming issue of "Crusader". It was that kind of convention. Not as big and busy as New York's, but that was good. It gave a person a chance to sit and talk with friends and meet people you wouldn't perhaps have time to meet with in New York.

A chalk talk, by Sal Buscema, followed the luncheon. Sal demonstrated his technique by drawing 3 pictures. These were to be auctioned off later in the day. I have to admire Sal. Drawing a picture on a vertical drawing board, with a number of people looking on behind you, has to be one of the most difficult things an artist can do. I know I'd hate to do it. The mere thought of it, gives me chills. Sal drew his favorite character, The Hulk, a shot of the Silver Surfer and, at my request, a head shot of Thor. I purchased the Thor, for Ellie, later at the auction.

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Sword & Sorcery

Quite a popular subject, at Con's this year, is sword and sorcery. The popular panel that discussed this popular subject at the Metro Con, consisted of Berni Wrightson (moderator) Bob Kline, Dave Cockrum, Mike Kaluta and Steve Hickman. Using the same format as in New York, Berni handed the mike to each panel member and let him express some thoughts on the subject.

Bob Kline: Bob thought the main problem with sword and sorcery in comics, would be in finding the correct way to present the subject. To find the right way to present a beautiful mental picture, created by an author, into pictures is a difficult thing at best. He also felt the Comics Code would hinder any sword and sorcery presentation.

Dave Cockrum: "The only way to handle sword and sorcery correctly, is through an uncensored magazine like Warren's." Dave would like to see someone present a sword and sorcery story, in comics, the same way they do in the novels. Present a story with the gloomy, horror type format.

Berni Wrightson: "Mood has a lot to do with sword and sorcery." That's the reason Berni didn't dig Barry Smith's Conan. He believed the character should center more on mood than muscle. Conan stories always relate to dark, gloomy moods. Berni spoke of Gil Kane's sword and sorcery stuff for Marvel. "It's a whole new and different approach than anyone's tried before."

Mike Kaluta: "I haven't seen too much sorcery. I've seen a lot of sword though." Mike felt that if the companies didn't make real sword and sorcery classics, it would all be a wasted effort.

Steve Hickman: "What is sword and sorcery? Robert E. Howard - that's sword and sorcery! He's the only guy, in this field, that can write it." Steve thought, that unless Conan was treated, in comics, the same way he was treated in novels, the book would be a poor one.

Opening statements made, the panel accepted questions from the audience.

How did the panelists enjoy Wally Wood's sword and sorcery stories? Berni answered, "I liked them. It's nice to see Wally's stuff come back, after kind of a slump."

Marvin Wolfman mentioned that if Conan and Marvel's other sword and sorcery stories sold, National had a sword and sorcery type book ready to come out. It would have its stories set in the future. The book had been shelved, when Nightmaster failed.

Did Berni think sword and sorcery would go over better in black and white and without the code? He felt it would do better without the Comics Code, but would rather see it in color. He didn't care for the Ditko stuff in Creepy. It didn't seem to have mood - too cartoony.

Why didn't Nightmaster sell? Berni believed it was too scatter-brained. No one knew what was going on. Even Kubert's covers didn't help. That's the reason Kubert did the covers--to sell the magazines.

Will sword and sorcery sell? It depends on Conan! If it goes over, then there will be more to follow.

Has there ever been a sword and sorcery newspaper strip? Not really. Prince Valiant comes the closest.

For the most part, I've covered the material that dealt with sword and sorcery. The rest of the panel's conversation dealt with generalities on sales potential, who buys what type of comic, and if sword and sorcery is done, it should be done as an art form, rather than to make money.

The next event was a fun one for me. It was a film showing. John Fantucchio and I made sound effect and dubbed in voices for an 8mm. Batman film being shown. Needless to say, we did not play it straight. Since it was being broadcast in the dealers room, as well, I'm amazed that John and I weren't promptly bounced from the hotel. John's a great guy, but rowdy. Of course, he says the same thing about me. The film show was a lot of laughs. (For us anyway.)

That evening, John and Mary gave Ellie and me a wonderful tour of Washington at night. It was beautiful. Ellie and I will always remember it.

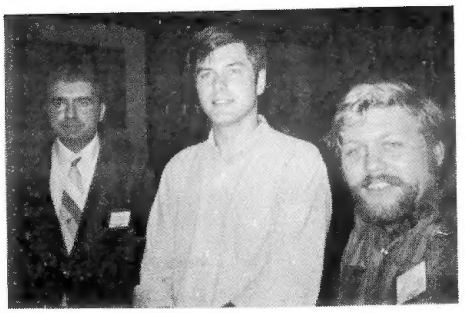
John Fantucchio

It was Sunday and the last day of the Metro Con. The first event of the day was a panel on comics, preceded by a short lecture by John Fantucchio.

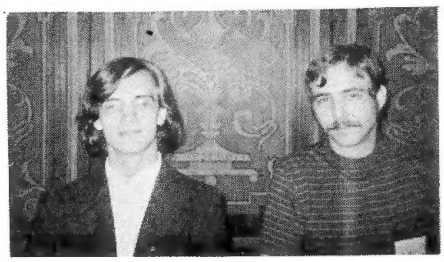
John's talk was on comics - past, present, and future. As John talked, he uncovered various charts he had prepared to illustrate his points. He told about the birth of comics and how they were reprints of daily and Sunday comic strips. Moving on, John covered the birth of Superman, in June of 1938, and the use of similar names in super heroes. Names using similar colors, for instance: Black Condor, Black Hood, Black Owl, Black Terror and Black Knight. Names using doctor, for another: Doc Savage, Dr. Fate, Dr. Frost, Dr. Strange, Dr. Mid-Nite, and Dr. Hypno. John talked about the number of heroes with the title Captain and told of the beginning of the super patriots - the red, white and blue heroes that would last for years. Then the decline of comics was covered. The time, in the early '50's, when people seemed to lose interest in comics and the time when the Comics Code was formed, due to an alarming use of horror in comics. Next, John told of the '56 to '70 period. The new Flash's appearance in Showcase #4, the coming of Green Lantern, the Justice League of America and the birth of the Fantastic Four in 1961. This was the era of the re-emergence of the super hero. John closed his lecture by commenting on the colorful super heroes fading from sight and their replacement by western comics, mystery comics and a dab of sword and sorcery. What would the future hold for comics? The panel following John's talk would discuss this and other aspects of the comic media.

The members of this panel were John Fantucchio (moderator), Dave Cockrum, Marvin Wolfman, Sal Buscema, Berni Wrightson, Holly Langhorn, and your editor, Martin Greim.

Economics of comics, was the first thing discussed. Marvin explained how the upgrading of prices would also upgrade the page count. Sal Buscema commented that for 15 or 25 cents, comic books are about the most entertaining things on the market today. Berni Wrightson, would rather spend 25¢ for a good comic, with a complete story, or 4 short stories,



John Fantucchio, Bob Kline and Dave Cockrum



Berni Wrightson and Mike Kaluta

Bob Kline, Dave Cockrum, Berni Wrightson Mike Kaluta and Steve Hickman

than spend 15¢ for a comic with just 2 stories. John Fantucchio stated that in comparison of the comic book of the '40's, which was the highest priced publication of it's day, the comic of the '70's is one of the lowest, compared with what is on the market. I explained that comics, when placed on the stands, are in competition with the higher priced publications, such as Playboy and slick magazines of that type. The store owners makes a profit on those magazines, where his profit on comics is almost nil! Holly Langhorn (mother of 2 boys and antique shop owner) suggested that comics like Casper the friendly ghost, remain in a lower price range, for the younger readers.

Distribution of comics was discussed between Dave Cockrum and his wife, who voiced a comment from the floor. Comics are hard to find today. Many places don't display comics well and they're hard to find. Marvin elaborated on the distribution problem. He explained that distribution is part of the cost problem in comics. Distributors take most of the profit. First you have your national distributor. He distributes the comics, nation wide, to the local distributors. The local distributors get them to the stores. They're reluctant to do this, because comics are taking up space they could use for more expensive publications. Finally, when the store owner gets the comics, he makes about 1¢ profit per comic. Now he'd make much more, on say Time Magazine. So it's a wonder that many places carry comics, when they take up space that a slick magazine could occupy.

How can fans help? Two ways. First, by complaining to your local distributor, when you can't find the comics. Call him, if you can't find comics locally. Complain! It's his job to find places to distribute comics - let him do it! The second way, is to write <u>directly</u> to the comic companies. Not to the editors, but to the companies. Write to Stan Lee, for Marvel or Carmine Infantino at National. When complaints come in, they'll contact their distributors and find out why.

Sal Buscema believed that comics should be updated. He felt that the distributors shouldn't mind a more lenient code type book, as long as they made money on it.

Berni Wrightson would like to see a Warren size magazine, with well painted covers and good interesting layout, for comics. He'd be willing to pay 75¢ to $1.00 for a good 64 page comic.

John Fantucchio and I got into a slight debate on the presentation of comics. John advocated a more expensive, hard cover, slick paper type of book, where I believe in the type of comic book being produced today. Most comic book readers aren't collectors like ourselves. They don't put comics into plastic bags, so they're untouched by human hands - they pick up a comic just to read it. You can fold it, carry it in your back pocket, do whatever you wan't with it. The comic book is both practical and salable in this format. I agree, on a book like Warren's or on the Time Magazine format. You can fold them, or do whatever you want, but a hardcover job, I just don't think it's salable enough. In answer to this, John thought two seperate lines of comics would be in order. One for the young adults and one for the adults. However, what if you dig the comics in the adult line, John? The idea of a slick magazine, in comic book form, was discussed. The idea was discarded, because of the production costs involved.

(MARVIN WOLFMAN)

Sal Buscema brought about a line of conversation that dealt with the changing of the name "Comic Book". National and Marvel really don't publish "COMIC" books. That term applies more to Harvey or Archie. However, to change the title of "Comic Book" to say, "Pictoral Novel" is a tremendous task. Comics have been branded with the title "Comic Book!" It's a matter of image.

This was, in essence, the Metro Con panel on the comics. A short time, after its end, John Fantucchio and Bob Kline judged an amateur art contest. First prize winner was Yuonne Saverin, who won a beautiful Don Newton painting of Superman.

Auction An auction, of an hour and a half of Berni Wrightson's time, was the spectacular ending to the Metro Con. With Marvin Wolfman as auctioneer, the bidding raged to $130.00! There were two winners - Martin L. Greim and 6 guys bidding as a team against him. If I hadn't driven to Washington, D.C., I could never have bid that high. However, I did drive and I had the plane fare for bidding money. You'll see the results of my winning Berni, in a future issue of Comic Crusader.

I'd like to say now, that Gary Groth put on a tremendous Convention! It was, in many ways, as professional as the one in New York. I want to thank him for inviting me.

<u>LATE NEWS!!!</u>

Both Wally Wood and Martin L. Greim are due to become fathers. I don't know about Wally, but I'm walking on air! More on Wally - It was reported in New York that Wally would be editing a magazine for Warren. Problems arose and he <u>will not</u> be doing it!

COMING NEXT ISSUE! FLASH GORDON

In **COMIC CRUSADER No.11** the long promised article on FLASH GORDON FILMS, by MIKE ROYER, will be presented! Not only this, but the whole issue will be devoted to Flash Gordon!

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